

THE
Philosophy of the Human Mind,

In respect to Religion;

OR,

A DEMONSTRATION,

From the necessity of things,

**THAT RELIGION ENTERED THE WORLD
BY REVELATION.**

ALSO,

*An Inquiry into the production, nature, and effects
of the Christian Faith, according to the exposi-
tions of Christ, and his Apostles—the detection of
long standing errors, &c.*

AND

The necessary dependance of the American Re-
publics upon the Christian Religion, for their
origin, and continuance, evinced.

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Preface.

READER—The *matter* of this book is addressed to your good sense, and sound judgment. It invites your most critical, and scrutinizing attention. But the *manner* of it, the style, &c. implore your clemency.

The investigation in the first Chapter professes to derive, from the very nature, and necessity of things, as they relate to the human mind, a demonstration of the truth of the Christian Religion; and, by the same conclusiveness of reasoning, a refutation of Atheism, and Deism, or Natural Religion.

The chief objects of this Book are to establish the truth, and importance of God's word, to the religious, moral, social, and civil interests of mankind; and to prove that it is clothed with a divine character of more practical efficiency, and influence, than many of the religious denominations seem willing to ascribe to it. The truths developed in this Chapter, fully evince the necessity of Revelation in producing many of the most important ideas which exist amongst mankind, and which constitute the very life, and soul of social order, and human happiness. They shew, by necessary inference, the defects of the *Pestalozian*, and every other method of education, (especially in the moral, and sentimental departments) which exclude the Christian Religion from their plan; and also the injurious consequences of teaching Natural Religion, in preventing the belief of the Revealed. The practical truth of these remarks will readily occur to your mind in reading the first Chapter of this Book.

The author has, for several years past, been persuaded that the Christian Religion has been greatly cramped, and, in many instances, denied its real influence upon society, and humanity at large, by the systems, and views of many of its sectarian professors; and, indeed, he may say, in a greater or less degree, by all: in consequence of which, it seems rather to be suited for scismatic purposes, pamphleteering controversies, and meeting-house exercises, &c. than for the amelioration of mankind, their improvement, and perfection, and the glory of God. Un-

PREFACE.

Under these impressions, he has paid but little or no attention to the opinions of men in his inquiries, further than they appeared to harmonize with the explicit revelations, and analogies of divine truth. The author has, in many instances, employed the ideas, and expressions of many writers, without marks of quotation, or even mentioning their names. This he thinks proper to state, in order to avoid the charge of having improperly plagiarized. By systematically avoiding to notice the opinions of any one denomination of Christians as contra-distinguished from others, in a controversial manner, he hopes to escape the fierce assaults of the religious polemic. Indeed, this book is not designed for controversy. No one denomination can charge the author with having manifested a partiality in favour of any other to its prejudice. He thinks that all the christian denominations are right in many things, and are wrong in not a few. He feels desirous that they should all be bound together in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of peace. This cannot be accomplished until they make some alterations in their *matter of conscience*—until they agree to make God's explicit revelations, and commandments the rules of their conduct, and the laws of their minds, and hearts, and attach to their peculiar schismatic opinions, which are too much the growth of their passions, and prejudices, a much less degree of importance than they do.

Gentle reader, the author does not pretend to disguise the firm belief that his investigations have established truths which refute opinions that have existed for many centuries in the Christian Church, and philosophic world; some of which took their rise in the age immediately succeeding the days of the Apostles. He beseeches you to spare the charges of self-conceit, ignorance, rashness, &c. until you have read, and understood the following sheets. His great aim has been to clear away the obstructions which prevent the *universal* belief of the Gospel, and the practical application of its principles to all the pursuits, relations, and conditions of men,

Introduction.

THE belief in a God is acknowledged by all to be at the foundation, and to form the principle upon which all *Religions* depend. My object in the succeeding chapter is to investigate the question with fairness and candour, *Whether the human mind, formed and circumstanced as it is, could, without revelation, have acquired the knowledge of God?* This inquiry will necessarily lead to an examination of the powers and capacities of the human mind, and the boundaries which limit its acquirement of ideas. The extent of our ideas will ascertain the limits of our knowledge; for, as Mr. Locke observes, *We can have knowledge no farther than we have ideas.* This, I apprehend, is the only method that can be pursued to establish the difference between *revealed* and *natural* knowledge, and to find out with certainty where truth lies. The votaries of truth cannot object to a course of inquiry so impartial, nor hesitate in adopting such conclusions as it must produce.

Disquisitions of this nature have been too much shaped to suit pre-conceived notions, and favourite opinions, formed in the mind, independent of *right reason*, and often in opposition to it. Mr. Locke very justly observes, further: "He that would seriously set upon the search of truth, ought, in the first place, to prepare his mind with a love of it: For he that loves it not will not take much pains to get it, nor be much concerned when he misses it. There is nobody in the commonwealth of learning, or who believes himself possessed of common sense, who does not profess himself a lover of truth—and there is not a rational creature that would not take it amiss to be thought otherwise of: And yet, for all this, one may truly say, there are very few lovers of truth, for truth's sake, even amongst those who persuade themselves that they are so. How a man may know whether he is so in earnest, is worth inquiry: And I think there is this one unerring mark of it, (*viz.*) the not entertaining any propo-

sition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon will warrant. Whoever goes beyond this measure of assent, it is plain, receives not the truth in the love of it; loves not the truth for truth's sake, but for some other bye-end. For the evidence that any *proposition* or *tenet* is true, lying only in the proofs a man has of it, whatsoever degrees of assent he affords it beyond the degrees of that evidence, it is plain all that surplusage of assurance is owing to some other affection, and not to the love of truth: It being as impossible that the love of truth should carry my assent above or beyond the evidence there is to me, that it is true, as that the love of truth should make me assent to any proposition, for the sake of that evidence which it has not that it is true; which is in effect to love it as truth, because it is possible or probable that it may not be true. Whatsoever credit or authority we give to any principle or proposition more than it receives from the principles and proofs it supports itself upon, is owing to our *inclinations* that way, and is so far a derogation from the love of truth as such: which, as it can receive no evidence from our *passions* or *interests*, so it should receive no tincture from them."

I hope the reader will attend to these observations of this great master of the human mind. It is not my wish that any person admit, embrace or assent to any principle or sentiment by me advanced, only so far as it shall appear to be supported and justified by proper evidence, or the reason and nature of things. I feel anxious that he keep his mind open to truth and reason, and that he labour to banish from his breast all prejudice, prepossession and party-zeal; assuring him that, as I enjoy myself, so do I freely allow to him the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience.

These observations are not intended less for the professor and advocate of christianity, than the avowed deist and atheist. The professors of christianity are too much in the habit of taking their religious principles upon trust, and not fetching them from their true and proper source. It is in this way that *errors* in religion have, since the first establishment of christianity originated, and under the sacred name of religion, it has sheltered and defended it.

self, and gained the character of truth, of important, necessary, awful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themselves bound in conscience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then, whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever so much in the spirit of meekness and peace, must do it at his peril. Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed which have fouled the christian name; hence those wranglings, debates, heats, and animosities, which have destroyed christian societies. This is one reason why the sceptic, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds absurdity mixed with the christian faith, taking the whole for a true account of christianity, rejects the whole. By this unhappy means what numbers have been drawn into deism! And by this unhappy means, I strongly suspect, if the truth were known, religion appears but in a doubtful light to many who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in its proper evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to understand its principles.

I have made the preceding remarks, not more on account of the subject of natural religion, than those which are necessarily connected with it, and which are hereafter to be attended to. The things chiefly to be learnt and understood in scripture are *principles*, and *propositions*, or the grounds and reasons of things; and *precepts*, which are the rules of duty. Now, if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion; our way will be all mist and clouds; that which should be light will be darkness, or, which is all one, a false light to mislead us; that which should be our joy, will be our heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course. Our path, which should be as a shining light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy, melancholy road, and we shall make our way with difficulty, because we want *that true sense, and knowledge of the ways and will of God*, which are necessary to give life, comfort and vigour. Chimeras and frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fears; God will be painted in monstrous colours; and all the ravishing glo-

ries of his truth, wisdom, and love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes; the lustre of redeeming grace will in part or wholly be eclipsed; some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others, of greater consequence, and especially those, when suitably regarded, which give most glory to God, and conduce most to the happiness of mankind, will be undervalued.

The advocates of revealed religion, by mistaking principles, and the divine evidences by which alone they are tenable, involve such palpable absurdities as to amount almost to a denial of its truth, and of its susceptibility of rational examination. This, instead of proselyting men to christianity, emboldens infidelity to rear its head, and lift its heel against the dominion of Jesus Christ, the divinity of his character and doctrines. This is not all: Deism, or scepticism at best, is the consequence of such advocacy; and thus the moral obligations imposed by the scriptures upon the minds, and hearts of men fail, through the failure in establishing their truth by the proper testimony, and its right use in the argument.

The *contradictions*, if I may be permitted the expression, which have existed in some form or other since the apostolic age, in almost every plan of the christian faith, formed into a system by human wit, have had their foundation in the erroneous ideas which have obtained in the minds of men relative to the *capacities* and *powers* of the human mind. They have originated, in part, in mistaking the nature and use of *revelation in words*, and the design of *miraculous works*, as they have been employed, and *ought now to be used*, (though of record) in communicating supernatural knowledge and establishing its truth, otherwise unattainable; and in misapprehending the imaginations and passions, the feelings, and the affections excited by religious subjects, for *the immediate operations of the spirit of God*. Natural religion, or that capacity of mind upon which it depends for acquiring ideas and knowledge of spiritual and invisible things by natural, without spiritual light, or the revelation of God's spirit, forms a chief foundation upon which those errors rest. It was first introduced into the plan of celes-

tial wisdom by the *Platonic christians*, with whom also originated scholastic theology, and mystic divinity. It was with an eye to these great errors that the apostles guarded the churches and persons to whom they wrote, 'lest any man spoil *them* through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' 'The profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called,' were of the same character.

Natural religion *necessarily* destroys the real nature and state of things as they exist in the human mind in reference to spiritual and divine knowledge. It contemplates man as in a state very different from his real one, and far superior to it. It denies the fact, that by original transgression man lost his moral ability, and his union and communion with God as an intelligent and moral being, and with them the knowledge of him; and that they are restored by the atoning or expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God's spirit through him, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and faith in him in his proper characters. It also denies the fact, that it is by the revelations of God's spirit *in words*, or that it is by the word of God that the human race, circumstanced as they are, acquire the *name and knowledge of God* and his character, together with his will and future purposes concerning them. Natural religion asserts that the natural powers of the human mind, without spiritual light, or the revelations of God's spirit by words, or immediate inspiration, can have spiritual perceptions; and, on the same account, denies that the book which we call the scriptures is the revelation of God, and that the human mind is dependant upon it for spiritual ideas. Upon the refutation of these opinions depends the universal acknowledgement of the indispensable necessity, the worth and the excellency of the scriptures as being the only mean of spiritual knowledge, for the learning of truth and righteousness, as being that which is perfect, and sure, what endureth forever, enlightens the eye, (the mind's eye) converts the soul, gives understanding to the simple, and is able to make all men wise unto salvation.

Should I be as successful in this investigation as I confidently anticipate, every voice under heaven will be silenced upon spiritual subjects in regard to their *original ideas*, but the voice of God's spirit; and this will be the first great step towards rectifying the many errors which human imagination has introduced into christianity. Natural religion silenced, or the opinion subverted that the human mind, without the aid of revelation, has a power of discerning God, the scriptures assume their proper character as the glass of spiritual vision. "There the mind's eye expatiates in a boundless field of heavenly light, and clearly views the objects and prospects of truth, where the light of mere nature could never have penetrated; there it beholds things through *description* which are not seen by the eye of sense, and which are eternal; there we see the being of God asserted and proven, his nature and perfections, his glorious majesty and universal sovereignty, described by his own spirit, as alone knowing the things of God, with the justest propriety of sentiment, and simple magnificence of language, which the Holy Ghost alone teacheth; revealing and explaining spiritual things by spiritual words; there we read, and through that reading learn, that not only an everlasting God exists, but also that he is the Lord, the possessor of all being, of all wisdom and power, who made the earth, and created man upon it; that he stretched out the heavens and commanded all their hosts—that he measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains and the hills in a balance—that he toucheth the mountains and they smoke, he looketh upon the earth and it trembleth; he beholdeth the nations as a drop of a bucket, and he counts them as the small dust of the earth; he takes up the isles as a very little thing. The whole universe rests wholly upon his arm, and is entirely subject to the disposals of his will. When we cast our eyes above; he created all these things, and brings out their host by number; he calls them all by name, by the greatness of his might, for he is strong in power, not one of them fails; in understanding he is infinite; he is mighty in wisdom, wonderful in council, and

excellent in working. He fills heaven and earth, nor can any hide himself in secret places from his all-penetrating eye. The earth is full of his glory and riches, and his providence is perpetually exercised about all and every one of his creatures. God is love; the Lord is good and doeth good; he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; he is daily loading us with benefits. The righteous he will bless; to them he will give grace and glory; and even to the wicked the Lord is plenteous, and rich in mercy."

These are the views of faith, or the perceptions of the mind through and by the revelations of God's spirit. These are objects and relations which are only discernible through that medium. These are the doctrines of scripture, and are to be found no where else, as the ideas which compose them can be produced from no other source. In this divine glass we find a two-fold covenant, one of works which threatens death to transgression, and the other of grace which grants the benefit of redemption and pardon. There we learn how God erected a kingdom, or a peculiar congregation, (the Jewish theocracy) amongst the nations, to prevent the universal corruption of the world, and to serve as a beacon upon a hill, to diffuse the light of spiritual, and divine knowledge in the darkness of the earth, which were lost in consequence of the loss of communion with God by reason of transgression. At length we see the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, who, in the divine mind, had been slain before the foundation of the world, and by virtue of which our sinful world was supported, appear to take away sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate the grace of God, and give the plainest explanation of his will and our duty; to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet in the ways of peace. In this gospel we see the dead, small and great, restored to life, and appearing before his judgment-seat to receive a sentence according to what they have done in their bodies. There he has, by his death, and resurrection, and *verbal explanation*, opened the glories of heaven to our sight, and shewn to our faith the

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the assured consequence of patient continuance in well doing by a life of faith; he has also uncovered the bottomless pit, the blackness of darkness forever, which will be the terrible portion of all impenitent workers of iniquity. These things, I say, are seen by the light which cometh from the invisible world, which, although liable to great perversions, as apparent in all the possible forms of idolatry and superstition, their truth and reality are not less certain on these accounts, but rather established, for a false religion necessarily presupposes a true one. The object of the writer of the following sheets, is to establish this, and to obviate all reasonable objections against believing it. This he expects to do by demonstrating the necessity of supernatural instruction (from the very nature and situation of the human mind) in order that the ideas and knowledge of spiritual things should exist in our world amongst men. His views, however, extend further than, (by disproving natural religion,) to shew the necessity of revelation; he desires to clear away the many obstacles which natural theology and its consequences, together with the misapprehensions of the powers of the human mind, and the design and use of the word of God, have necessarily produced in the various systems of the christian faith, to the practical belief of the gospel; and which have compelled a resort to a plan or theory of spiritual operations which are not warranted by the doctrines taught by Christ and the apostles, and for which (if the antecedent errors are removed) there can be no necessity in order to an evangelical faith in the Redeemer.

In the great and bitter controversies about religion, it seems as though its *real design* and use amongst men were entirely overlooked, or greatly disparaged. Its use in civilizing mankind, it would appear, is rendered doubtful by the mutual consent of its friends and enemies. The minds of men are more engrossed with *their own peculiar explanations of scripture*, and anxiously engaged in defending them against the opinions of other men, each making their own expositions the orthodox rules of faith, and charging their adversaries with heresy, with a zeal too, contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and very often in violation of its chari-

ties, than in counting the blessings which accrue to a sinful and miserable world, from the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in cultivating gratitude to God, and love to mankind, as the essential parts of its practical duties. It is not sufficiently realized, that it is the religion of heaven, revealed in God's word, that makes the people of civilized society differ from savage man, and forms the only true basis upon which a popular government can stand;—or, in other words, that it is by its principles alone, in their appropriate operations upon the minds of men, which produce that character, and degree of philanthropy, and disinterestedness; that *honesty of heart, and love to mankind*, without which there can be no security for the continuance of a republican government, founded in the equal rights of the members of society. The reason is very obvious: without a full view of the destiny of man, which is only developed by the revelations of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which ascertains a ground of obligation and responsibility otherwise unknown, his supreme interest would, of necessity, be his earthly, individual aggrandizement; restrained only in the prosecution of avaricious, sensual, and ambitious projects by physical necessity: So far is the observation from the truth which asserts that *there is no necessary connection between the christian religion, and politics*; or, as the great political sage of Virginia* has made the legislature of that state declare, in “*an act for establishing religious freedom*,” which he drafted, “*that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry*.” In their laudable zeal to secure religious liberty, and the freedom of conscience, they have declared that the civil rights of men, and the administration of justice, have no dependence upon those revelations of God, without which the true character, duties, interests, and relations of men could not be known. The fruits of the christian religion, exhibited in the lives of men, are what assimilate them to their divine creator; while a course of conduct directed by other principles, is earthly, sensual, and devilish. The influences of revealed religion, in regulating

* Mr. Jefferson.

the conduct of men, are not restricted to the professors of christianity; they produce a considerable effect upon those who avowedly reject it. The manners and customs of society, and the opinions of mankind, which are in any degree characterized by a correct and pure morality, derive that quality from revealed religion. It was by reason of the purifying moral influences of the gospel that its first teachers were called, in the emphatic language of the Saviour, *the salt of the earth*; and on account of the spiritual knowledge it affords, (as a prerequisite to those influences) and the destiny it unfolds, it is justly styled *the light of the world*, and *the light of life*. Those sentiments, and that conduct, deserve the name of evangelical christianity only, which are produced by, and proceed from the truth of God's word established in the understanding by the force, and authority of divine evidence, exhibited by the spirit of God in his word. The word of God thus established in the heart of a believer, becomes the man of his council; is a light to his feet, and a lamp to his path. To his mind it makes all nature vocal; either expressive of the majesty, glory, mercy, and goodness of God; or of his hatred to sin, his will, and power to punish it. The *reflected* light of christianity, as it influences men's conduct *merely by imitation, and through the influence of public opinion*, without the root of the matter being in the heart, is destitute of warmth and energy, and falls as far short of its essential intrinsic purity, and excellency, as does the light of the moon in warmth, and brilliancy, of the heat and refulgency of the sun. Indeed such an imitative christianity does not proceed from the heart, and only throws an *exterior* lustre around the conduct. Although it adds, by reflection, but little moral worth (properly speaking) to the agent, (for the want of just motives) it is productive of signal advantages to society.

Should I succeed in establishing what I believe true, (viz.) that, situated, and formed as man is, the only way by which God is known to exist is, *by revelation in words*, comprehending his name, and by description his attributes, and character; and that the sensible portion of the universe which falls within the sphere of our senses, is only subservient, and tends, in some degree, to illustrate, and to *prepare*

the mind to *receive* but not to *originate* the ideas thus revealed, I shall conclude that I have destroyed the foundation of natural religion, and that the whole superstructure must fall. In case of this result I shall feel myself authorised to erect the christian religion *as true*, upon the ruins of natural religion; for should it turn out that the *name* and *idea* of God could not, from a necessity of nature, exist in the mouth, or mind of man without revelation, it will follow as a necessary consequence, that religion entered the world by revelation, and not by nature, or the exercise of human reason upon it. But I design not to stop here; I intend to prove from *natural necessity*, that language itself is so far supernatural or divine in its origin, that all those terms, used, which are not expressive of naturally sensible objects. and their properties were revealed, and are the means *in our day*, (as they were when first communicated,) through which the knowledge of spiritual and invisible things is acquired, of beings whose archetypes are not objects of sense, and of whose existence our present mode, and state of being render us unconscious. Of such are God himself, his presence with us, and support of our existence; creation, the spiritual world, the immortality of the soul, the character of Jesus Christ, his mediatorial government, the resurrection of the body, the destruction of the present heavens, and earth; a future judgment, a heaven and a hell, the future abodes of men, according to their character as determined at the final judgment, &c.; all of which are objects of faith, and not of sight or human reason. Should I make this out, it will follow as a truth, that the language used for these purposes, or the words employed, are the stipulated or appointed signs of ideas; stipulated, and first used by God himself, in his communications to man; and that having been revealed for the above purpose, they have been perpetuated by written records or oral traditions. The former method of preservation would, of necessity, be less subject to adulteration, and would, by correct education, produce in the minds of succeeding generations more certainly the ideas and knowledge first communicated; while the latter would be liable to great corruptions, and monstrous perversions. Owing to the mind, naturally, being conversant with the objects,

of sense only, unless the original revealed signs of ideas, with their explanations, and descriptions, were preserved in their pristine simplicity, and purity, and so learnt, the imagination would soon assimilate the idea of God, &c. to similitudes, or *forms*, and thereby produce idolatry, or image worship. This we find to have been, and still is the case amongst all the nations of the earth, who have not the Jewish, or christian scriptures; such is the strong propensity to *similitudise*, or to attach form to spiritual objects on account of their being supernatural, and the incapacity of the mind to think of other than natural ones, except through revelation. So far from natural religion being true, the Jewish nation (the immediate subjects of the theocratical government with the records of the old scriptures in their hands) sometimes were engaged in idolatry with the Canaanitish nations. To guard against this natural propensity, formed the chief object of Moses' valedictory address to the Israelites, in Deuteronomy; and the difficulties in learning spiritual things, and forming just conceptions of them in the mind of every person, are owing to the same causes. This is a fact of which every mind must be conscious that will make the experiment.

The previous investigation will prepare the way for just ideas on the subject of faith, which is treated of in the second chapter. The truths established by the investigation of natural religion, will form the foundation of the theory of faith; for upon them rest the *supernatural character* of the propositions, and the divine evidence by which alone they can with consistency, and absolute certainty be believed.

It is not less, a just rule in religion, than in civil affairs, that the allegations, and proofs must agree in the establishment of truth. If a principle is asserted to be a supernatural or a divine one, the proof by which it supports itself must be so too, or it cannot in reason be believed. The bare *assertion*, that any proposition is divine, can never produce any rational conviction that it is so; and he who makes it, however sincere, and zealous he may be, deserves not the assent of a reasonable mind. It is by *proof*, by *divine proof*, properly exhibited, that *belief* in such a case is, or can with propriety be produced. Upon this simple view of the subject is built the doctrine or theory of the christian faith, and the evi-

dence of the spirit of God will be exclusively relied upon, addressed to the human mind as an intelligent being, not by imagination or passion, but in distinct, and intelligible terms, to produce it. In order to its practical influences upon the lives of men in producing the *obedience of faith*, after the truths are discovered, will be shewn the design, and use of the christian ordinances, together with the providences of God, including the evils which are incidental to humanity, such as its wants and necessities, sickness, pain, and sorrow, both of body, and mind, and of death itself—all of which, *when explained*, have a practical bearing upon man as a sinner, and as a probationer under a dispensation of grace for a future state of being. These are conducive to a life of faith when acting upon a person in whose mind the truth of God's word has been previously established by its proper evidence. What are called the evils of our world, and declared by God to be the effects of sin, are thus overruled, under the dispensation of grace, for the purposes of practical piety. In this sense they are said to be sanctified to the believer. Every christian will perceive, and feel the truth and force of these observations at once; and the greatest number of them will recognize the providences and chastisements of God, operating mediately or immediately upon them, in having made them teachable under his word; and every person at all acquainted with the nature of either domestic or civil government, will perceive a striking analogy, and perfect harmony between the means by which obedience is produced in these, and the obedience of faith in the christian religion as above explained. In each, the rule of action is first prescribed, commanding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong, with ample testimonials of the sovereign authority by which it is established, and promulgated. Obedience is produced by the apprehension of the displeasure of the ruler, and his entire ability to punish, and certainty of punishing transgression; and the assurance of protection, favour, and happiness, in consequence of obedience. But, because the sovereign in the spiritual government is not an object of sense, the knowledge of whose existence, and will, are only attainable by his revelations, and as the day of judgment, for the distribution of

rewards and punishments, is beyond this present life, (which is the period of probation) the means of his government are so far different from, as the circumstances are dissimilar to, those of a temporal or human government. It is, however, the intellectual and moral powers of man, which render him capable of government in either case.

I shall bestow some attention upon other subjects in distinct chapters, than those contained in the two first. Although some of the subjects are acknowledged to be high, and mysterious, I trust that my manner of treating them will prove offensive to no person. My only object will be to rescue them from some erroneous ideas which seem to surround them, and to make them subservient to the formation of proper opinions relative to the great Sovereign of the universe, and also conducive to a rational piety. A consistency will be preserved between the principles developed in the first two chapters, and the regular deductions in the last. No vain speculations will be indulged about the *secret things of God*, for the same reason that those things which have been revealed had remained secrets to the human race without that revelation. Yielding implicit obedience to the declarations of inspiration, that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law," I feel an utter unwillingness to go beyond them.—Indeed it is with a view of demonstrating the necessity of God's word in order to our knowing any of the things of God, *as such*, that this work has been undertaken; "for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, which things also we speak, (said the Apostle) not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, *explaining spiritual things in spiritual words.*"

CHAPTER I.

Natural Religion, and Atheism, investigated, with a view to their refutation, and the establishment of the truth of the Revealed Religion.

Section 1.

The Powers of the Human Mind considered.

THE extent of our ideas ascertains the limits of our knowledge, for we can have no knowledge where we want ideas. The human mind is incapable of originating simple ideas by the exertion of its own powers, and they are never produced but by impressions upon the senses, and reflection. All our ideas *originate* from *sensation*, and *reflection*; it is by them that the mind is made conscious of existence; and the materials of the most diversified knowledge are obtained in that way; the ideas of *reflection* are dependent upon those of *sensation*, for they proceed from them, or are formed by the notice the mind takes of its own operations upon those of *sensation*. This seems to be a truth so well established by the experience of every person of observation, that but one opinion prevails in respect to it. Its truth is bottomed in the *necessity of things* as they relate to the mind; it is of the same kind of necessity with that which restricts our hearing to the ear, and vision to the eye. This is a subject upon which it is in the power of my reader to experiment, if he will attend to the operations of his own mind. For that purpose I will propose the following familiar exercise:—It is desired to know how the mind acquired the ideas of colour, and sound in general? The mind at once looks to, and points at, the eye, and the ear, as the channels through which these ideas were obtained. Ask a child ten years old, this question, and his answer will be the same. If it is

true in general, it is also true in particular. If light is perceivable only by the eye *as light*, so is all the various tints of light, and shade. If sound is only perceivable by the ear, so is all the variety of tone, from the loudest thunder, down to the softest whisper, including all the articulate sounds as signs of ideas. I am asked to describe the leading properties of gun-powder. I enumerate the sensible appearances it exhibits in the act of explosion; I say that it emits sound, light, and heat. In this enumeration I express in words, (which are by consent, and usage, the signs of ideas of sensation) the sensations which I experienced in witnessing the explosion. But perhaps I had never seen the explosion, nor witnessed by sensation the qualities enumerated; I may, however, have learnt them by *verbal description*, and by that description, could represent them to others; in order to this, I must have had the ideas of light, sound, and heat, and of course the senses upon which those impressions were made, (*viz.*) the senses of seeing, hearing, and feeling, if the first ideas of them originated in my own sensations. The description only *applies* the ideas previously received (by the use of words) to the gun-powder, in a state of combustion.

The powers of imagination, and description, the mind possesses to an inconceivable degree, although, for their exercise, it is dependent upon the ideas, and the words which are their signs, previously received, and understood; for Mr. Hume very properly observes, "Although nothing is so unbounded in its operations as the powers of the mind, and the imagination of man—to form monsters, and join incongruous shapes, and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble, than to conceive of the most natural, and familiar objects; and whilst the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain, and difficulty, the imagination, and thought, can transport us in an instant into the most distant regions of the universe. But although our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that *all this creative power of the mind, amounts to nothing more than the faculty of combining, transposing, augmenting, and diminishing the materi-*

als afforded us by sense, and experience." Of the same import are the observations of Mr. Locke. He observes, "The simple ideas are the materials of all our knowlege, which are suggested, and furnished to the mind only by sensation, and reflection. When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make, at pleasure, new complex ideas. 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 force of the understanding destroy those that are there." They may be variously combined, and differently associated, but not annihilated. "The dominion of man in this little world of his own understanding, being much what the same as it is in the great world of visible things; wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, reaches no farther than, to compound and divide, or decompose the materials that are made to his hand; but can do nothing towards making the least particle of new matter, or destroying an atom of what is already in being. The same inability will every one find in himself who should go about to fashion in his understanding any simple idea not received by his senses from external objects; or by reflection from the operations of his own mind about them. I would have any one try to fancy any taste, which had never affected his palate; or frame the idea of a scent he had never felt, and when he can do this I will also conclude that a deaf man hath distinct notions of sounds." Mr. Locke concludes, "That it is *impossible* for any one to imagine any other qualities in bodies, however constituted, whereby they can be taken notice of, besides sounds, tastes, smells, visible, and tangible qualities. Had mankind been made with but four senses, the qualities, then, which are the objects of the fifth sense, had been as far from our notice, imagination, and conception, as now any belonging to a sixth, a seventh, or an eighth sense can possibly be; which whether yet some other creatures in some other parts of this vast and stupendous universe may not have, will be a great presumption to deny." As no possi-

ble combination of the elementary parts of matter, however diversified, and extended, can produce a result which is *immaterial*, or which is destitute of the properties, and qualities of matter; so no reduction of compound bodies can be carried beyond the elementary forms out of which, or by which, they were produced. Equally and necessarily circumscribed, and limited, are the operations of the mind, with its own ideas, whether derived from sensation, or reflection. I say, *or reflection*; for the mind having received the ideas of sensation from without, by external impression, when it turns its view inward upon itself, and observes *its own actions* upon those ideas it ha. from sensation, it takes from them other ideas which are as capable of becoming objects of its contemplation as any of those it received from foreign things; these are called ideas of reflection. Hence the ideas of reflection are formed by the attention the mind pays to its own operations upon the ideas of sensation; as for example, the *idea of perception*, and the *idea of willing*, we form by reflection; or by turning the attention of the mind to itself when in the act of perceiving a thing, or in the act of willing; in the first instance perception, and volition were produced by, or employed upon, objects of sensation, or ideas produced by it—but neither the ideas of perception or volition, or any other reflex idea, are capable of farther analysis than to the principles already enumerated; and they ascertain no other powers in the mind than those which are employed in their origination and use. The power of the mind in forming reflex ideas, and the use it makes of them, are all employed in the investigation of mind itself—it is through them that the mind becomes acquainted with itself; but not so, in its investigations of *external* things.

I wish it not to be forgotten, that the ideas of reflection are by a necessity of nature, *subsequent* to the ideas of sensation, as they are formed by the attention the mind bestows upon its own operations when exercised or employed by the ideas of sensation; and I desire the reader to bear in mind that the ideas of sensation and reflection form the entire limits of our knowledge. These preliminary definitions, and explanations, are all-important to the present inquiry, and I am happy to find that all the logicians, and metaphy-

sical philosophers, whether advocates, or opposers of revealed religion, concur in them.

Section 2.

The powers of the mind exercised upon the objects, and laws of nature, and its own faculties, in order to the discovery of a creation, or a first cause independent of nature, and the failure of such a conclusion, arising from the necessity of things.

I will now, by fair experiment, try whether the powers, and resources of mind can be applied in any way upon nature so as to originate the idea of God without revelation. In order to this, we will suppose that every thing appertaining to Deity is to be discovered, comprehending his *existence, name, and attributes*. In this inquiry we will make no abatement for the increased energy, and enlarged capacity which the mind derived from that culture, and improvement which it acquired in the school of revealed religion; or from that education, which was connected with, and consisted in part of revealed ideas, for the investigation of the present subject. That the mind gains strength by use; by its extension of knowledge, and exercises upon it; that its activity, and resources are multiplied; its inventive powers disciplined, and matured; and what logicians call the *analytic, synthetic, and inductive* powers (which are the methods, and exercises of right reasoning) are developed, and perfected, must be acknowledged. Yielding all the advantages which the mind derives from revelation itself, in these respects, for opposing its necessity in originating the idea of a God, (except the ideas, and words which it affords not otherwise known,) we will proceed to the inquiry.— For the sake of *clearness, and certainty*, I will lay down the following rules for the direction of the investigation, which I am sure every thinking, and reflecting mind will acknowledge to be correct, and just:

1. To concede nothing that is not self-evident; and to take nothing for granted that ought to be proven.

2. To employ, no more causes in explaining an effect than are obvious, and sufficient.

3. To permit the use of no *name* or *noun-substantive*, nor terms expressive of qualities or attributes which are not attached to objects within the ken or apprehension of the mind by sensation or reflection (through their *ordinary* operations) agreeably to the former definitions of these terms.

4. To draw no conclusion but what is just, and fairly contained in the premises.

In directing our attention to the various objects which address the senses, and impress the mind through them, we are struck with their great variety, both in appearance, and quality. The sun, moon, and stars, exhibit a splendid, and magnificent scenery to the eye; they are not less remarkable for the order, and harmony of their motions, than necessary to our globe. The earth, with its inhabitants, exhibit a great diversity indeed. These, from their peculiarity of character, are divided into three kingdoms; the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral; and each is marked by a regular gradation of difference, and is partitioned out into *orders*, *genera*, and *species*; governed by definite, and regular laws. Our earth performs regular, diurnal, and annual revolutions, by means of which, day, and night are produced, and the different seasons of the year. The animal, and vegetable orders are stimulated by the solar light, and heat into life, and energy; and when the shade of night comes on, they, for the most part, assume a state of repose, during which period they renovate their strength for the renewed excitements, and exercises of the succeeding day. The annual revolutions of the earth, produce seed time, and harvest; and during the rigours of the winter season, the animal, and vegetable kingdoms, and particularly man, recover from the exhausting influence of the summer heat, and the disease-producing tendencies of the autumnal vapours. The spring, and summer, strew their fruits along as they pass for the nourishment, and health of man, and other animals. The autumn, matures the crops of fruits, and vegetables, reared in the spring, and summer, and replenishes the store-houses of men, and other animals, with the necessary food, until the succeeding year shall renew the supply.

The surplus of the fields, and the foliage of the forests are committed to the earth, to restore its fertility, which the growth of the preceding summer had exhausted. The winter frosts, and snows, and rains, dislodge from the atmosphere the morbid gasses, and diseased particles which were produced by the previous autumnal putrefactions of animal, and vegetable substances, and thereby render animal life more healthy, the air more salubrious, and the earth more prolific.

When we descend from general to particular observations, we find that every order of organized matter, whether animate or inanimate, are undergoing incessant changes by decompositions, and new combinations; exhibiting new properties, proceeding from those changes.

The human race is propagated by parents, whose offspring in its forming state presents scarcely the appearance of life, but which, by the operation of the laws of the animal œconomy, progresses in its strength until a perfect fœtus is evolved; and after having attained suitable strength and size, is ushered into the world complete in miniature. The circulation of the blood is now diverted from its former course; and instead of deriving air through the lungs of the mother, the helpless babe, is obliged to expand its own, by an effort to relieve a suffocating sensation in its labouring bosom, arising from an accumulation of blood about the heart, and thereby admits the vital current which is now to sustain the life, and warmth of the whole body. The little stranger is for the first time also exposed to the external influence of air upon the body, and of light and sound upon the eyes, and ears. It advances from this state of infancy to childhood, with a progressive developement of its intellectual powers, proportionate to the growth of the body and senses, and their excitement by external causes. By regular advancements, he reaches the state of manhood, having, in the course of his observation, and experience, acquired the knowledge of the sensible objects which surrounded him. Old age and decay at length come on; and after a few struggles of dissolving nature, he falls into the ground; or is made food of for other animals. Were we to bestow particular attention upon the propagation, progress, and succession of other ani-

mals, we should perceive the same progression, and change, differing according to the grade, and œconomy of their nature.

The vegetable kingdom is propagated through the instrumentality of seed or slips; the growths of it have their rise, progress, and decline, regulated by the laws of life peculiar to themselves. If we examine by chymical analysis, we shall find that there are a few elementary principles, which by various combinations, effected by different laws of attraction, form the various objects of sense with which the mind is conversant.

If we attend to the mind's operations, we perceive the exercise of different powers; first, that of perception, by which it sees things addressed to the senses, as well by their immediate impression upon the organs, as through the signs of ideas, or words which have been stipulated by consent, and established by custom; after ideas are thus acquired, the mind has the power of reviving or calling them up again; this power we call memory; it also has the power of comparing two or more ideas together, and deducing a conclusion relative to their agreement or disagreement; this power we call reasoning; it has the further power of combining the ideas previously received, of transposing, augmenting, and diminishing them; this power we call the imagination. In the exercise of all these powers the mind is under an absolute necessity of having *something* to act upon, not being able to *form any idea out of nothing*, nor to conceive of any thing but through sensible existence, and its qualities or properties operating upon it. Hence, however variously it may combine, transpose, &c. the ideas it receives from the sensible objects which surround it, it is necessarily limited by the materials thus derived. By combination, it may form new ideas, or produce new associations; it may conceive of a golden apple, or a diamond mountain; in neither of those cases, however, can it be said that the mind has done more than to make a new disposition of the ideas it had previously received. There is no more of a *creative* power manifested here, than is by a workman, who forms a house with the materials furnished to his hand—nor is there any more power to act independent of materials in the former than in the latter case. No principle is better established

by the universal experience of all men, in the kingdom of nature, than that *something* cannot proceed from *nothing*. Human ingenuity has been as unable to annihilate a particle of matter, as to create one; all that can be effected is to produce new arrangements in the principles, and substances already existing, by mixtures, by decompositions, or new combinations.

If, then, it be asked, whether matter has existed forever? The evidences of nature compels the mind to answer in the affirmative; for matter which is neither augmented, nor diminished *essentially*; and which can neither be created, nor annihilated, is *stern* in the assertion.

There being nothing *intrinsically* in the elementary properties, compound forms, nor laws of matter, which can suggest any thing relative to their *beginning*, no information can be drawn from them which *of itself* points to an existence of an anterior date, and whose nature is entirely dissimilar to them. The mere *existence* of things, can give no intimation of their beginning, so far from justifying a conclusion that they originated from nothing.

Should the order and harmony of nature in its different aspects be urged as a reason for their beginning, or creation by an intelligent first cause, the same reason will apply with equal or superior force in favour of the beginning or creation of the creator of nature himself, and of the creation of his creator, and so on without end; for order and harmony must exist, in as high a degree at least in the nature and attributes of the creator of the natural order, and harmony, as are discoverable in that order, and harmony, and of consequence must as strongly indicate his creation. A more correct conclusion seems to me would be, from the mere order, and harmony of nature, that nature has ever existed; for this state of things more justly warrants the belief of a *perpetual* state of natural existence, (including the principles of self-preservation within its own œconomy) than any other; indeed I cannot see how any other can possibly be drawn from the premises; and we are not to forget that according to the 4th rule in page 20, we are to draw no conclusion but what is obvious, and fairly contained in the premises.

But should a beginning, or a creator be still inquired af-

ter, and contended for; I ask whence this inquiry about a beginning, about the origin of nature in her diversified powers from nothing? Nature herself in none of her possible operations suggests either a beginning, or a radically different order of things from that which appears, and consequently affords no suggestion for the inquiry about a beginning or creator. To be a little more particular—What facts of *sensation* transpire in the view of the mind which intimate either the beginning, or creation of matter, or the existence of a *creator* who is not an object of sense, whose *being* is independent of matter, whose power and wisdom created it from nothing, and controul the sensible universe? No person has ever seen a creation, the beginning of something from nothing; there is an entire want of *fact*, and *analogy* upon the subject. But according to the third rule, viz. “to permit the use of no name, or noun substantive, nor terms expressive of qualities which are not *sensibly* attributed to sensible objects,” I ought to have objected to the words *creator*, and *creation*, as not belonging to the language of nature, and which the mind on that account could not have originated. The same may be said of “*spiritual existence independent of matter, and the governor of nature*; for no such existence or relation of things are discernible by the mind in the regular operations of nature, and of course it could not have formed language expressive of such ideas; as the facts which are the archetypes of them, whence they are taken, have no natural existence.

I may be told, (for this is a leading argument with natural religionists) that the operations of the human mind, consisting in its influence over matter, its intelligence, and design in the works of art, and skill direct to the conclusion of an invisible intelligence, who controuls the natural œconomy. We will attend to these things.—We see a man building an house, or constructing a watch, adjusting all the parts to the completion of the whole. In the former case, the result is, a place suited for the habitation of man, comfortably sheltering him from the inclemencies of the seasons, and protecting him against the encroachments of his enemies; in the latter, a time piece is produced which with considerable accuracy ascertains to the mind the succession

of time. But is there in either of those cases a creation—the origination of something from nothing? Is there more of a creation here than the beaver evinces in erecting his dam, the bee in forming her comb, the spider in spinning its web, or the sparrow in constructing her nest? I ask, farther, by what means have we learnt that men build houses, construct watches, &c.? Is there any *instinctive* knowledge upon these subjects; or is not our information derived from experience, and observation? Would a person, supported in a dungeon from infancy to manhood, without having *seen, heard or felt* the operations of mechanism, upon first being ushered into open day, and perceiving, for the first time, a house or a watch, infer that man or any other animal had built or constructed them? I think no person who will examine the powers of his own mind, and the rise, and progress of his own acquirements of knowledge, will answer in the affirmative.

The powers of the human mind, however penetrating and improved, can produce no effect upon matter, but through its laws and properties; any effect produced in this way is as dissimilar to a creation as the existence is dissimilar to the non-existence of matter.

Again, does the mind in a single act or operation indicate a separate existence from matter? But, on the other hand, is it not *naturally* self-evident, and proven by daily experience, and observation that the mind is not only dependent upon matter for its operations, but is also *necessarily* dependent upon, and connected with, *animal life* for its *very being*, as well as exercise? Who has ever thought without a brain animated, and has not ceased to think upon the destruction of the brain, or the extinguishment of life? How easy is the philosopher degraded into an idiot by a stroke on the head, or a wound in the brain; and how suddenly is the most intelligent, penetrating mind thrown into a delirium or phrensy by a fever? This is not all.—There is nothing in the *natural order of things* appertaining to mind, which proves that it is any thing more than a *quality* of organized matter, under the influence of animal life. The above facts and observations prove it.

It can be of no weight in the inquiry to say that the desire of life is a proof of the contrary; for every animal, and insect desire life, and avoid danger, and pain, which are destructive of it;—and will any person say that these are proofs that they have minds or spirits independent of their bodies, and that life, which they are desirous of preserving? Indeed if the desire of life in man, and his endeavours to preserve it, are evidences of a separate existence from his body, the superior manifestations of those principles in other animals give them higher claims to separate mental existence from their bodies.—The voluntary sacrifices men make of their own lives by intemperance, in duels, and by various other methods of self-destruction, none of which are practised by other animals, evince stronger marks of a supernatural existence in them, or one independent of the natural constitution of their bodies, than can possibly be attached to man. Conclusions drawn from such premises as the above in favour of a creation or a superintendent insensible existence are not less absurd than to infer the distance of Philadelphia from Lexington from the fact that one dollar has been, by a law of Congress, rated at one hundred cents—they are conclusions without premises. Nature suggests no other than natural existence, regulated by her laws. Nor is it possible for the human mind, armed with all the acquisitions of which it is capable, from nature, and by attention to its own operations, to exceed the limits of time, and sense, and natural existence. As the senses can never exceed their natural limits, (the eye perceiving no sounds, the ear perceiving no figures nor colour, &c.) so the mind which is furnished with its ideas through the senses from the properties, and qualities of sensible objects, can never exceed the limits of those ideas, however variously it may arrange, and combine them.

Such is the humble situation of man by nature, both in respect to his mind, and body; without a knowledge of God in the world, ignorant of his own origin, and the origin of all things, and of his own destiny; a creature of time, flesh, and sense; a mere animal—*an Atheist!* The universal language of nature, in respect to all *animal beings*, is *death*; the experience, and observation of every day utter the same

voice—from its cold offensive embraces there is no escape in all the resources of nature; nor is there a solitary ray from the light of nature which breaks through the deep, impenetrable gloom of the grave, and points to an hereafter! No light of life irradiates the horrid mansions of the dead, nor redeems humanity from its insatiable devourings! Her lesson is “Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die.” The last, and best hope of man, derived from the lessons, and illuminations of nature, has its final termination here! There is none “to deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage”—in all the domains of nature! The king of terrors, and the terror of kings, has an absolute sway over men, and beasts, and all creeping things; over the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and there is none to arraign him, or to say, why or what doest thou? O death, thy sting is fearful! O grave, thou art victorious! There is no balm in *nature*, no physician’s there, that can more than allay for a moment, the pangs of dissolution, or protract but for a short period, declining life.—The iron sceptre of death has unrestrained sovereignty.—Such is the voice of nature, uttered from her thousand mouths, and by her thousand tongues!

Section 3.

The same subject continued:—

The incapacity of the mind for spiritual discernment, or the perception of a God, by the light of nature without revelation, being so important for establishing the *necessity of revelation* in order to a knowledge of the existence of a God, I will vary a little the investigation, lest the argument, and reasoning should appear incomplete. We will suppose a person, born without *eyes* and *ears*.—I ask whether such a person by the greatest possible exertion of his mind upon the objects of the remaining three senses, (*viz.*) the objects of taste, feeling, and smelling, could acquire the knowledge of light and sound? The answer of *natural experience* is in the negative. I ask why? Because the mind is inaccessible to light,

and sound. We will suppose that the person thus contemplated, should have suddenly given to him eyes and ears; with astonishment he beholds the spectacle of the universe; this is quite a new exhibition to him, and, when compared to what he knew before, is supernatural, (making the three first senses the limits of natural perception). His knowledge is increased by the addition of the new senses, with the operations of light and sound—although his reason and understanding are vastly enlarged, and diversified in their range; can he with that help penetrate beyond the outsides of the newly extended limits of nature, and find out any thing beyond the objects of sense, and their sensible relations to one another? If, without eyes, and ears, he could not reach the limits of sensible existence formed for, and addressed to, the mind, having five senses, through which it holds intercourse with the world; how could the accession of eyes, and ears, impressed by natural objects, extend his ideas, and knowledge beyond those sensible limits enlarged by light, and sound? No answer can be given to this question in favour of such an extension, unless it can be proven that by the *natural* influences of light upon the eye, and of sound upon the ear, the mind is inspired with ideas of existence, and things essentially different from objects of sense, and their properties in every possible relation, and character whatever. This, I cannot suppose, will be pretended by any person who thinks at all upon the subject;—it would be as practicable for a person to see colours through the ear, and to hear sounds through the eye.

The powers of the mind by which it acquires, and combines ideas, will much aid this inquiry, if we attend to their operations in their regular order. Those powers we formerly enumerated; we divided them into perception, reflection, memory, imagination, and judgment. For the sake of illustration, I ask whether the power of perception can be employed, except upon objects submitted to the senses, or upon the operations of the mind on sensible ideas which we call reflection? I have enumerated reflection as a power or faculty of the mind; which I have done in obedience to common usage. Reflection, if properly analyzed, will be found to be nothing more than the mind's *perception* of its own

operations; perception in this case differs from the perceptions of external things in nothing more than the operations of the mind upon its ideas, and its own exercises, being the objects of the perception. The mind's perception of its own acts, by which it forms reflex ideas, is impossible, without those objects of sense upon which alone its powers in the *first place can be exercised*. An example will make this matter plain.—The person supposed to be born without eyes, and ears, would not of necessity perceive light or sound, and of course could form no reflex ideas by attending to the perception of light or sound, and the various objects exhibited through them. Can a perception be made without an object? Can the memory act, except in calling up, or reviving ideas which were previously perceived by sensation, or the combination of simple ones, or those of reflection? Can the imagination be otherwise employed than upon the materials furnished by perception, either of external things or of its own operations? And can the judgment be exercised except upon ideas thus produced? The answers to these questions, formed by the necessity of nature as it relates to the mind, must be in the negative. I ask then for the origin of the ideas of creator, creation, spiritual existence, &c.? I urge the natural religionist to point out their archetypes in nature; but I urge in vain. The task imposed upon him by the demands of the investigation is not less difficult, and impossible than to require of him to see light by the sense of feeling, and to hear sounds by the sense of smelling. There exists no fitness or connexion between the means and the end.

For further illustration, and proof, we will ascend from the plain experience of common sense to the regions of philosophy, and science; from which we shall obtain a result perfectly correspondent with the preceding; for there subsists a harmony between the most simple, and complicated truths; those of the latter description are bottomed upon the former, and are composed of them.

We will commence with *mathematics*.—What is the language of mathematics, and what are its objects? The language of mathematics speaks only of *quantity*, either as subject to *measure* or *number*. Mathematicians have divided

this science into *pure*, and *mixed*. The former considers quantity abstractedly, without regard to any particular bodies: the latter that of quantity as subsisting in bodies, and consequently they are intermixed with the consideration of physics or experimental philosophy. Pure mathematics are arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and fluxions. Mixed mathematics consist chiefly of mechanics, pneumatics, hydrostatics, optics, and astronomy. I ask whether *measure*, *number*, or *proportion* can possibly direct the mind to a conclusion which partakes of none of these properties, and has no connexion with, or dependence upon them; or to the discovery of an existence to whom none of these terms can possibly apply; to a being who has no relation to time, not being older to-day than he was yesterday, nor younger to-day than he will be to-morrow; to a being who has no relation to space, not being a part here, and a part there, or a whole any where; whose circumference is no where, and whose centre, (if I may use the expression) is every where; to a being who is in his own nature, immaterial, independent, and eternal; *who is being*, simply considered, in, and of himself, to whom nothing of assignable forms, colours, or qualities can attach, and who is infinitely removed from our natural conceptions, to whom no finite idea belongs, whom no line can circumscribe nor period bound? Or can *reflection* upon the operations of the mind, when investigating the nature, and qualities of measure, number, and proportion, originate the idea of an existence of the above character? Can *chemistry*, which treats of the nature, and properties of matter, and their influences upon each other, aid in such a discovery? Impossible. I might traverse the whole circle of *natural* science in vain, were I to expect to learn any thing from them but what appertains to the objects, and subjects about which they are conversant, and which are made cognizable to the mind by their *sensible* properties only. The investigation of anatomy, of physiology, of the nature, and œconomy of the mind, together with the affections, and passions, the sympathies, and antipathies, and indeed every thing which belongs to man as a physical, animal, intellectual, and moral being, including the laws, and principles which regulate, and govern all the various operations, and functions,

from the most minute parts up to the perfect whole; I say such an investigation could produce no other ideas, nor impart any other information than what belong to these objects, and subjects, about, and upon which it is employed.

Motion has been resorted to by the natural religionist as furnishing a strong evidence in favour of a creation, &c.— We will attend a little to its nature, and see how far it is applicable to such a conclusion. Motion pushes, stops, composes, and divides, but it produces neither the elementary matters which enter into the composition of all bodies, nor the vessels of organized species. The laws of motion are intrinsic parts of the œconomy, and are commensurate, and co-extensive with it. Were we as clearly informed as we are ignorant, in what manner or how motion is concerned in the decompositions, and new combinations of nature, we should remain entirely ignorant of the origin of the elementary principles thus employed. We should not know nature herself though we had made never so great a progress in the study of motion. The scene of nature changes every moment, and is incessantly renewed. But why is it always the same in each of its vicissitudes? It is because motion assembles, and mingles things already made, and nourishes species of a determinate structure, by the principles of assimilation, &c. belonging to that structure. But motion forms no species at all, nor does it ever (as above observed) produce the simple natures which supply the increase of each species. Motion speaks no other language than that which appertains to the changes of nature; it extends not beyond them, and of course nothing ulterior to them can be learnt from it. Motion applies the stimulants to the organs of sense; which, acting upon their excitability, and sensibility, produce sensation, and consciousness. The laws of motion, as before observed, are intrinsic parts of nature, and do not exist independent of it.

The old hackneyed assertion in favour of a creation, “that every *effect* must have a *cause*,” will not, I suppose, be considered as at all applicable to this inquiry, after what has been said in the previous parts of this investigation. Before a *cause* can be urged as necessary, or its existence

granted, an *effect* must be proven, of such an origin, and character, as required its agency in order to its production. The first rule, in page 19, for the regulation of this investigation, requires us to take nothing for granted that is not self-evident, and to concede nothing which ought to be proven. In obedience to that rule, the proof of an effect, as it relates to the existence of the universe, being required, no concession of a first cause independent of, and separate from, the sensible universe, can be made until that proof is introduced. Sensation, experience, and observation, are all mute upon the subject. Did the face of nature one century past exhibit more works of a beginning or a creation than it does at this time? The voice of natural history says no; we might run back along the course of time until lost in the depths of antiquity, and at the end of every century repeat the same inquiry, and we should obtain the same answer. On the side of natural reason, and invention, every thing is dark, and impenetrable. By what sure, and certain steps, an uninstructed mind, which *never heard of God*, could rise up to the knowledge of an infinite, spiritual, and uncreated nature, I have no conception. The fable of the giant's rearing mountain upon mountain to invade heaven, has something more specious in it than the fable of a groveling, silly, human mind, crawling up to light inaccessible without a ladder. Where shall the savage (for all are such by nature) set out? He is without the *name* of what he is to seek; yet names are the only marks of essence to which he could affix any discoverable or conceivable properties; and names cannot be given to things of which the mind has no apprehension. When or where then could he begin to search for he knew not what? To these interrogations nature is stupidly insensible, and silent, and is as unable to give an answer, as are the stocks, and stones to impart instruction to, or relieve the distresses of their poor blind worshippers amongst the idolatrous heathen. Indeed idolatry commenced in the world by men attaching to the objects of sense those attributes of divinity which God had previously revealed as belonging to himself. Natural religionists have, in a great measure, acted the same part by ascribing to nature the power which is only attributable to God, the exercise of which

is his exclusive prerogative, (viz.) the revelation of himself to man, and the derivative existence of all things besides himself, and their relative destinies. By giving to nature this power they have destroyed the divinity, and authority of God's word in a great degree—it supersedes its necessity.

Section 4.

The name, and character of God as creator of all things, &c. and the relation which man bears to him, &c. entered the world by revelation in words, whose divine origin, and truth were established by miraculous or supernatural facts addressed to the senses, and explained by words, in order to such knowledge. The knowledge which thus originated, and was first established, has been perpetuated from one generation to another by verbal instruction from record, or oral tradition.

In the preceding sections of this chapter, the *natural* inability of the mind for originating the idea of God was demonstrated. I now proceed to shew the way by which that knowledge is attainable, in doing of which I shall furnish a complete refutation of Atheism. As the mind in the due exercise of its powers upon nature, the various objects of time, and sense, falls entirely short of any idea of spiritual existence, or of a supernatural nature; it is self-evident that all knowledge of that description, and character, must be of a *supernatural* origin. The very *existence* of such ideas in our world is itself a proof of the revelation, and of the truth of those things thus revealed. The truth of revelation, of a supernatural communication, from this view of the subject, is just as evident as the existence of light is certain. We only know the latter by its effects, operating upon our minds through the sense of seeing. The same is true with respect to revelation. It is addressed to the eye of the mind, and imparts light upon spiritual, and invisible subjects, as certainly to the understanding through, and by words, as the stipulated signs of ideas, as the former does by impressions upon the eye. The very end of revelation

is to discover to us by a supernatural light from heaven those objects, relations, and truths, which we are naturally ignorant of; and not the truths which we naturally know. As *Thomas Paine* has very justly observed, "That which is revelation exists in something which no human mind, aided with all the powers of nature, could invent":—This I mean particularly in regard to *original ideas*. It is true that revelation may teach, and often has taught men what *has* occurred, or *will* hereafter take place, in the operations of nature; but what I mean by original ideas, as above stated, appertain to *existences*, and *relations*, which are entirely beyond the limits of nature, and not deducible from any of her operations; such are the idea of God, creation, &c. We need not the assistance of revelation in any of those things in which the *natural* ways of knowledge could produce them. Revelation begins where such knowledge ends, and the great object, and use of it is to extend our knowledge beyond the limits of nature, into a state of being of which nature gives no intimation.

I now proceed to shew in what way revelation produces these effects. In our day we have no other than traditional revelations, which in christian countries are in writing, and found in what are called the scriptures, or *The Writings*, by way of pre-eminence, and distinction, and sometimes *The Bible*, or *The Book*. Amongst the heathen, and pagan nations, they are preserved in oral traditions, though prodigiously mutilated, and monstrously perverted. All revelation in its beginning must, of *necessity*, have been *immediate*, and made too in *words*, stipulated or appointed by God himself; for, according to the previous investigation, not only the *ideas* must have been revealed, but also *the very words* in which they were communicated. Words are the signs of ideas, and ideas are the signs of things; but the things of which we are informed by revelation we only know through that revelation, whether it relates to the existence of beings who are, from a necessity of their own, and our natures, inaccessible by sensation to the human mind; or to the insensible relation of sensible beings, to an insensible existence. As the archetypes of those things revealed do not impress the senses as in natural cases, and are known only through their

signs, or by the words through which they are revealed, it follows as a necessary consequence that the signs or words *must* produce the ideas, and must have been appointed or stipulated by the Revealer for that purpose. Language is the only mean through which the mind is capable of receiving instruction of this nature.

In the former sections of this chapter it was necessary to exclude the use of all terms, and expressions, which were not manifestly derivable from sensible things, and their properties, in order to establish the limits of natural knowledge, and to ascertain the point at which supernatural ideas began; as well as to discover the means by which they were, and are produced. I shall now proceed to shew that language is so far superhuman, or divine in its origin, as to have been revealed, so far at least as it is the medium of communicating knowledge upon invisible, insensible, and spiritual subjects. The reason for this origin of language, is founded in the *necessity of nature*; for those ideas which could not have been conceived of, without supernatural communications, prove by their very existence, and character, such an origin of the medium through which they have been produced.

It is the opinion of a majority of the greatest philologists, that language (consisting in significant articulate sounds,) was revealed, and that the *formation of society*, or the *convention*, which organized it, was the *consequence* of language, so far from language being the consequence of convention, and human stipulation; this opinion, by tradition, seems to have prevailed amongst the pagan philosophers. Plato maintained that the original language of man was of divine foundation; and when he divides words into two classes, the primitive, and derivative, he attributes the latter to the ingenuity of man, and the former to the *immediate* communication of the Supreme Being. The Egyptians, from whom this opinion was probably derived, maintained that by *Thoth*, the god of eloquence, their ancestors were at first taught to articulate. Thoth, amongst the Egyptians, is the Theos, or Logos, in revealed theology. This theory is conformable to the description given in the sacred writings, and agrees very remarkably with the opinions to be collect-

ed from prophane history. "To whatever part of the globe (says a great critic, and one of the present professors at Oxford,) we direct our view, we shall find additional reasons to conclude that all the languages now spoken in the world were derived originally from one, and the same, notwithstanding their apparent difference, and variety. All the present languages, and dialects of Europe, amounting to about twenty-seven, may be traced to Latin, Teutonic, and Sclavonian. But there is a remarkable affinity, in many instances, between Greek, and Hebrew; Greek, and Sanscrit; Greek, and Chinese; English, and Arabic; Turkish, and Celtic; Welch, and Arabic; Latin, and Otaheitan; Latin, and Turkish; English, and Persian, &c. When we observe that certain words used in one quarter of the globe are like those in another, which is very remote, and that such words have exactly the same signification, and were so used long before the present inhabitants had any intercourse with each other; how is this to be accounted for? This identity or resemblance more or less exact of names which denote the same ideas, and those ideas, some of the most striking and important to mankind in every age of society, seems to point to the same source. It is *more* than probable that one original fountain of speech, and one only, has produced not only those various streams of diction, and such as the Celtic, that have been long dried up; but supplied those likewise, such as the languages of modern Europe, that still continue to flow. By the critical analysis of words is proven the connection of the present inhabitants of the globe with those who sprang from the original families of the earth, the immediate descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, the sons of Noah. For a more particular investigation of these subjects, Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, the works of Skinner, Sammes, Pezron, Junius, and Parkhurst, may be consulted, together with Rowland's Mona, Williams' Primitive Christianity, Kett's Elements, and Gale's Court of the Gentiles." Hugh Blair observes, upon the origin of language, "One would think that in order to any language, fixing, and extending itself, men must have been previously gathered together in considerable numbers; society must have been already far advanced; and yet, on the other hand.

there seems to have been *an absolute necessity for speech previous to the formation of society*. For by what bond could any multitude of men keep together, or be made to join in the prosecution of any common interest, except by the intervention of speech they could communicate their wants and intentions to one another? So that either how society could form itself, previously to language; or how words could rise into language previously to society formed, seem to be points attended with equal difficulty. And when we consider, farther, that curious analogy which prevails in the construction of almost all languages, and that deep, and subtle logic on which they are founded, difficulties increase so much upon us on all hands that there seems to be no small reason for referring the first origin of all language, to divine teaching, and inspiration." Correspondent with the opinion of Plato, the same great critic observes: "But, supposing language to have a divine original, we cannot, however, suppose that a perfect system of it was all at once given to man. It is much more natural to think that God taught our first parents only such language as suited their present occasion; leaving them, as he did in other things, to enlarge, and improve it as their future necessities should require."

The celebrated author of the 'Wealth of Nations,' supposes, (in opposition to the opinion that language was originally revealed by the great creator) that "two savages who had never been taught to speak, and who had been bred up remote from the societies of men, would naturally begin to form that language by which they would endeavour to make their sentiments intelligible to each other, by altering certain sounds whenever they went to denote objects. Thus they would begin to give names to things, to class individual objects under a species, which they denoted by a common name, and proceed gradually to the formation of all the parts of speech." The condition of these two savages is wholly imaginary, as it cannot apply to any persons who have ever been known to exist. It may fairly be asked how they come to be in such a state? Was it in consequence of their previous determination? If it was, then they must have conversed in order to make such an agreement. If it was not the result of such a measure, they must have been pla-

ced there by other rational, and talking beings, and must, consequently, have acquired from them the names which, in their recluse condition, they applied to surrounding objects. If they borrowed the terms from others, then, of course, the hypothesis of a language considered as an invention of the savages, falls at once to the ground.

Somewhat different is the theory of lord Monboddo from Mr. Smith. He supposes that language was not originally natural to man, and that the *political* state of society was necessary for its invention. This principle forms the basis of his elaborate work on the origin, and progress of language. He asserts that man in his *natural state* is a wild animal, without language or arts of any kind. To prove this, he quotes Lucretius, and Horace, Diodorus Seculus, and Leo Africanus, together with many other writers.

It is impossible, from the very nature of things, that man, in a *natural state*, can exist without the fostering aid of improved life, nor can we conceive of man's *beginning* to exist, and to be supported, without the aid of his creator in a supernatural way. Contemplate for a moment the situation of Adam, just brought into being by the creating power of his maker; possessed of mind, and faculties, senses, and appetites, without knowledge, as he was without experience, and having every thing to learn; is it possible that he could in that situation distinguish between what was conducive to health, and what hurtful? Before he could pretend to discriminate at all, he must have first learnt by experience, those things which were of an injurious, and those of a beneficial tendency, and no one object before him could have had the preference to any other, without the previous experience of their properties. The sense of hunger would not have prompted to what was *good for food*, sooner than to what was poisonous; nor could it have directed him how to eat it.

In short, it is certain, that without the immediate interposition of God, Adam, the first man created, must have died. This is not less true from the nature, and necessity of things, than from revelation. If such must have been the situation of man in a *natural state*, in regard to the objects of appetite, and sense, what must have been his situation in respect to the knowledge of God, who is not an object of sense?

If we judge from self-consciousness, experience, and scripture, (observes a great man) the truest definition of man will perhaps be found, to be *an animal capable of speech; and through that medium of reason, and religion.* For there is a wide difference between a *capacity* of acting, and the act itself. A watch, or other machine, fitted up with admirable skill, and perfect in all its parts, cannot put itself in motion; neither can the mind. Thus the intellectual faculties have a power to work, when supplied with materials to work upon, and not before; the mind is then carried into action, its secret springs exert their proper activity, and the rational frame enabled to think, and reason. If we consider the nature of speech, something so supernatural, and divine appear to all who have duly weighed it, Heathens, Jews, Christians, and Atheists, (for even Hobbes could say God taught Adam this useful invention) that they pronounce it to surpass the invention of men. The learned Whitby was so far convinced of language being the immediate gift of God, as to think it a clear demonstration, that the original of mankind was as Moses delivered it; from the impossibility of giving any other account of the origin of language.

Indeed every article in those short memorials of the first passages after the creation, imply an instruction by this means; it being inconceivable that man should understand the words of God, before he was taught them. Whence it must be allowed that though Adam had a capacity, and organs admirably contrived for speech; yet in this case there was a necessity of his being immediately instructed by God, because it was impossible he should have invented speech, and words to be spoken, so soon as his necessities required it.

Upon subjects whose objects, and qualities are insensible, or lie beyond the reach of sense, man *could not think*, till he had language given; and of course could not upon those subjects be a rational creature. Upon them he can no more think than speak without words; words are as necessarily prior to both (as the stipulated signs of ideas, and the means by which they are produced,) as causes to their effects. The mind cannot think upon nothing. Things which are insensible naturally, cannot by natural sensation enter the

mind, for those which are insensible naturally cannot have natural signs. This is precisely the case in respect to the creator, &c. The signs then, or the words, and language expressive of his name, and character, &c. are supernatural, and it is those signs which enter the mind, and produce there the knowledge of the existence of the archetypes, or things signified. In subjects of this nature, words are the marks of essence by which the mind distinguishes things, one from another, according to the character attached to them by description or representation; and, till furnished with them, the mind cannot think about, or act upon, them. For the truth of these remarks, I appeal to the reader's own experience, and observation, of what passes within his own mind; and if he can think upon spiritual subjects without words, I yield the point. Indeed, it is impossible for it to be otherwise, because words are the only bodies, or vehicles, by which the existence, sense, and meaning, of all objects, and propositions of that character, are conveyed to the mind; so that till the mind is stored with them, it has nothing to think or reason upon, or judge by. Upon these subjects, all we learn is *by* words, all we think is *in* words, and without them, could neither learn, think, or teach, much less have the most distant conception of "things not seen." The demonstration is conclusive—Language on invisible, and spiritual subjects, cannot be contrived without thought, and knowledge: but the mind cannot have thought, and knowledge, upon them without language; therefore language must be previously taught before man could become a religious creature: and none could teach him but God. The first use of words was to communicate the knowledge, and thoughts of God, which could not be done but in the words of God, and of course by himself. With the royal preacher it was "a point of wisdom to know whose gift she is." To this the necessity of nature, in order to her attainment, and the scripture in imparting it, give a plain solution. (1st.) In general "it is God that teacheth man knowledge, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." "The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple." "The words that I speak, they are spirit, and they are life." "The things of God knoweth no

man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God—Which things, also, we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; explaining spiritual things in spiritual words." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2ndly.) With regard to spiritual matter, they particularly inform us, that "faith," or an assent of the understanding, grounded solely on the attestation of God, "is the evidence," the only assurance, and proof, "of things not seen," or of whatever does not fall under the cognizance of the senses.

This shews whence the impossibility of men's any way acknowledging the true God, Jehovah, without revelation. "For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, or how shall they hear without a preacher," or one to instruct them in such knowledge. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Agreeably to these ideas, and scripture declarations, the great Parkhurst observes, "If it be asked why the second person in the Adorable Trinity is called the *Word of God*? the easiest, and most natural answer seems to be, because HE hath always been the great *Revealer to mankind* of *Jehovah's attributes, and will*; or because, as he himself speaketh, (as before quoted) Math. 11. 27. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; and John 1. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, HE hath declared him." The divine person who has accomplished the salvation of mankind is called *The Word*, and the word of God, Rev. 19. 13. not only because God at first created, and still governs all things by him, but because men discover their sentiments, and designs to one another, by the intervention of words, speech, or discourse; so God, by his son, discovers his gracious designs in the fullest, and clearest manner to men. All the various manifestations which he makes of himself in the works of crea-

tion, providence, and redemption; all the revelations he hath been pleased to give of his will are conveyed to us through him, and therefore he is, by way of eminence, fitly styled the word of God." Correspondent with this exposition are the words of Peter in his first General Epistle i. 2: "The prophets," (taken from verse 10th) "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, *did signify*, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

THE WORD, as above explained, was the Thoth of the Egyptians, or the God of Speech or Eloquence, from the traditional notions of whom, as the revealer of language, Plato derived his ideas of primitive, and derivative words, as formerly suggested.

An additional light may be cast on this subject, from observing the prodigious use of NAMES in acquiring, and retaining knowledge upon spiritual subjects, (and indeed natural ones too in a great degree) for they being the objects of thought, the mind can neither describe, define, or even conceive of, any being till acquainted with the name, and meaning of it; as that not only distinguishes existences from each other, but is the bond which ties together the several properties peculiar to each, and that constitutes things what they are in the view of the mind. For the qualities, and powers of substances which make up the complex idea of them, are images too subtile, and fleeting for the mind to detain, without some *mark of essence whereunto it can annex them*.

After God had inspired Adam with a right knowledge of the creatures over which he had given him a dominion, and, doubtless, names correspondent with their intrinsic natures, which none but their creator knew, he brought unto Adam every beast of the field, and fowl of the air, to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Nor is it reasonable to imagine that God should thus miraculously instruct him in the knowledge of his fellow creatures before that of his creator. On the contrary, we find the words *God*, and *Lord God*, used upwards of forty times in the two first chapters of Genesis, which were names, and marks, not only of existence, but of all the glorious perfections revealed of the di-

vine nature. For as a name cannot be given to what we have no notion of; and man is invincibly ignorant of “things not seen,” so neither could he discover, understand, or apply any attribute or property, till he knew the name of the object to which, alone, they appertained; and no information of them could be had, but from the word of God, that is, revelation. The mind, upon spiritual subjects, can have no other objects of thought, but by or through words, and names, which therefore must be prior to recollection, reflection, or any mode of thinking. And it is as great an absurdity to say that a man without reason or experience could create language for the instrument of thought, and reason; as that he could create a world for himself, before he was in being.

For the rational faculty consists in a power to exert its several operations, on the materials it receives, and understands; to record, or dispose of them in a proper manner; to call forth, and separately consider them; to divide, compare, and judge of their agreement, or disagreement; and thereby become able to form propositions, and draw conclusions; that is, to think, and reason. But the instrumental cause of reason must be previous to it. What was previous to reason, and a necessary instrument of it, must be taught by some intelligent agent, before reason could be exercised. No such agent was prior to the first man, but God, (or spiritual beings at his appointment). What he taught was by revelation—consequently revelation was the first principle of all knowledge, and the means whereby the creator intended man should become both a rational, and religious creature.

The powers of language, or the powers of the mind in the use of language, are amazing. By the aid of language, or through the knowledge it imparts by revelation, we are enabled to *see* things which are *invisible*, and are taught relations which have no *sensible* existence; by it we learn our origin, and destiny, neither of which have we ever had a personal, conscious experience of, and the same is true in respect to the sensible universe. Although nature gives no intimation of man’s original creation, his resurrection from the dead, or his immortality, he is taught by “*Him who hath*

immortality, and power," that he shall live forever. The revelations originally made, and which impart supernatural knowledge to us by record, did not consist, originally, alone of words. *Miraculous appearances, and supernatural manifestations,* addressed to the external senses, together with words explanatory of them, by which they were applied, as proofs of the truths revealed in words, were employed, in accommodation, no doubt, to the limited nature of man's faculties. Supernatural, and spiritual knowledge, have been imparted to the mind by sensation, through the eyes, and ears, by external, traditional revelation by language, since immediate revelations, and miracles, ceased. It comes primarily through the ears. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is through that channel that we learn the meaning of God's word; through the ears, and eyes together, we learn to read it. The miraculous, and supernatural appearances, which were first manifested in signs, and wonders, in confirmation of the divine truths revealed in words, are presented to us in connection with those names, and descriptions, whose objects, and properties, are not naturally visible or sensible, for the same purpose for which they were first exhibited. The only religions in the world are the Jewish, and Christian, which pretend to a claim of such authority, or seek to establish themselves by such testimony: Some of a spurious order have claimed the support of *secret* miracles; these, however; had never been thought of, but for revealed religion, any more than the counterfeit of a name, or a coin, could have been attempted, without the previous existence, and knowledge of them. The true religion would have amply satisfied mankind, had it been apprehended, and received in its proper evidence; but mistaking the revelations, and miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost in order to them, as did Simon Magus, these instructions, and evidences, have been thought applicable to other purposes than to impart knowledge, and to establish the truth upon divine subjects. Out of misapprehensions upon this subject have arisen the most monstrous errors, and corruptions in religion, and the most horrid, and sanguinary persecutions. Not only the great declensions from christianity in early times, but the confused cry of the multitude, lo! here is

Christ, and lo! there he is, in our day, have proceeded from the same source. The restoration of it to its primitive simplicity, and purity, will consist in nothing more than in teaching, and learning it in the words by which it was first revealed, and believing it by the evidence which the Holy Ghost gave in the signs, and wonders wrought to establish it. As soon as christian teachers, and people become so far divested of pre-conceived notions, and mystic prejudices, arising from the traditions of men, and science, falsely so called, as to realize the literal force, and import of the sentiment, "that the spirit of God only knoweth the things of God, which he hath revealed in words; which he teacheth, and which are not taught by the wisdom of men," then the word of God will become the man of their council. And also, when they come to understand, and feel the import of the Evangelist John's declaration, nearly at the close of his history of our blessed Lord, (viz.) "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name:" I say, when they understand the import of these expressions, the scriptures will be exalted into their proper character, and the evidence which Christ gave exclusively relied upon, in believing that he is the Son of God. The *allegata*, and *probata*—or the allegations, and proofs, perfectly correspond in nature, and character. Christ declared that he was the sent of God, and the Saviour of the world—that he was one with the Father. These allegations were divine; the proofs he gave to establish them were also divine, and supernatural—he did the works of God, by raising the dead, by healing the sick, giving eyes to the blind, &c.; and, finally, his human body was crucified by men, and in three days was raised from the dead, as he had predicted, by the Holy Ghost: He was thereby (as Paul says) declared to be the Son of God, with power. After this, he ascended into heaven, and sent down the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as he had promised. These are a part of the divine proofs by which the allegation, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, is proven, and by which his authority as such is established in the minds of men.

When divine truth is thus apprehended, first through the revelations of God's spirit, and secondly proven by divine testimony; men will learn to pay but little court to their imaginations, and passions, in learning christianity, or in the obedience of faith; and the enemies of christianity will cease to think it reasonable to oppose it, but, on the contrary, the best, and highest reason to believe it true. For the word of God would then be clothed with its proper character, *as the word of God*; it would awaken fear, and trembling, instead of derision, and ridicule. It would give reality, and practical efficiency to the truths revealed.

Section 5.

Mr. Locke's opinion examined, and refuted, in which he asserts, "That we derive from nature all the simple ideas of which we are possessed; and that traditional revelation cannot communicate any;" with illustrative proofs, derived from the Bible, and experimental matters of fact of the truths established in the foregoing Sections.

The weight of Mr. Locke's name, as authority, in opposing the principles developed in the previous parts of this investigation, I can well appreciate. I have, however, paid but little attention to great names, nor attached much importance to authorities, in my inquiries. I have endeavoured to observe Mr. Locke's rules, (*viz.*) "not to entertain any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon will warrant;" and to "search after truth for its own sake," being assured that "whatsoever credit I give to any principle or proposition, more than it receives from the principles, and proofs it supports itself upon, is owing to my *inclination* that way, and is so far a derogation from the love of truth as such: which, as it can receive no evidence from my *passions, interests, or prejudices*, so it should receive no tincture from them." In consistency with these rules, and by the most imperative logical necessity, agreeably to the truths formerly established, I am compelled not only to dissent from Mr. Locke, but, in the most direct manner, to

contradict him, in a fundamental article in his philosophy of human understanding, as it relates to revelation. The paragraph containing the opinion which I deem so erroneous, and, I may say, so fatal to the truth of revelation, is the following: "No man, inspired by God, can, by any revelation, communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before, from sensation, and reflection. For whatsoever impressions he himself may have from God; this revelation, if it be of new simple ideas, cannot be conveyed to another by words, or any other signs, because words, by their immediate operation on us, cause no other ideas but their natural sounds, and it is by the custom of using them for signs, that they excite, and revive in our minds, latent ideas, but yet only such ideas as were there before." And hence he concludes that "*No simple ideas can be conveyed by traditional revelation.*" A conclusion which puts the Bible, and every other book, upon the same footing, as depending upon a natural, and not on a supernatural foundation. To illustrate his meaning, and prove the truth of his opinion, he cites the case of St. Paul, "when he was wrapped into the third heavens; whatsoever ideas he there received, all the description he could make to others of that place, is only this, that there are such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." The error of Mr. Locke consists in making inspiration, and revelation the same thing, both as to the *manner*, as well as the *matter* of them.

The attention of the reader is very particularly requested to this part of the discussion; for the point upon which I am now engaged with Mr. Locke, is the one upon which natural religion turns, and is the strongest battery against the revealed. Mr. Locke, in this sentiment, is with every atheist, deist, and natural religionist, (the two latter are of the same meaning,) who have ever written against christianity, and it is by demonstrating the error of his opinions that their refutation will be secure.

I again repeat, that the error of Mr. Locke consists in confounding inspiration with revelation. He would seem (on this account,) to have established the fact, that "No simple idea can be conveyed by traditional revelation," by his

quotation from Corinthians, of Paul's inspiration, and consequently, that all the simple ideas, and the component parts of complex ones, are plagiarisms from nature, which are found in revelation; and, of course, that the Spirit of God, by revelation, did nothing more than combine the ideas which the human mind had previously received from nature; an inference which destroys the very essence, and design of revelation. Such a conclusion presents the Bible in the same character with the Alchoran, and Vedum; "*Revelation serving only*" (in his own words) "*to revive in our minds latent ideas, but yet only such as were there before.*" I grant that inspirations are revelations, but all revelations are not by inspiration. This distinction once established, and Mr. Locke's hypothesis must fall to the ground. It is a distinction which Mr. Locke surely never thought of, or he could not have drawn a conclusion from Paul's incapacity to describe or communicate the ideas he received when wrapped into the third heavens, for the want of stipulated signs of ideas, or words, that traditional revelation can communicate no new ideas. That was a revelation by inspiration which exhibited to Paul's mind a view of those things which it was not possible to utter, on account of a want of words; the Deity having previously revealed none by which to express them. And indeed the things which he saw might have been ineffable, having appeared to his mind in their essentially divine, and spiritual character, being incapable of delineation, and only discoverable *as they are*, when this mortal shall put on immortality. Of this import are the words of John. "It doth not yet *appear* what we shall be, *but we know* that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Were Paul, and John taught those things by nature, or in the words which man's wisdom teacheth? But the testimony of Paul is directly against Mr. Locke; for he observes, in the second chapter of first Corinthians, "It is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard," (naturally no doubt) "neither have entered into the heart of man, the *things* which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save

the spirit of man, which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, *that we might know the things which are freely given us of God—which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; explaining*" (as Macknight translates the passage) "*spiritual things in spiritual words.*" This was an inspiration; and a revelation was made by words declaring the *things* which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor had they entered into the heart of man to conceive of. Again; that was a revelation (without inspiration,) which God made to Adam in Paradise, when *his voice was heard*, walking in the midst of the garden in the cool of the day. That was a revelation in words by which it was first known, and is now known, that God, after creating the heavens, and the earth, and dividing the light from the darkness, *called the day light, and the darkness night.* (Gen. 1. 4. 5.) That was a revelation without inspiration, consisting in miraculous appearances, and words, which were made to Moses from the burning bush, and elsewhere; and to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai. In these cases there were no inspirations, but external revelations, consisting (as before remarked,) of supernatural, and miraculous appearances, addressed to the eyes, and ears, and the revelation of *God, by name*, accompanied with verbal explanation of the character of the being thus announced. These revelations taught the meaning and use of the name of God, as being expressive of the *creator*, and *governor* of the world; who, although naturally not an object of sense, by his supernatural manifestations in signs, and wonders, and words explanatory of them, demonstrated his existence, and universal sovereignty, and absolute claim to their exclusive obedience, and worship. It is only by the *custom* of using words, as Mr. Locke observes, that they become the stipulated signs of ideas. This was precisely the case in respect to the use of the names *God, Jehovah, &c.* The custom, however, of using them, and the purposes for which they were first communicated, were established by God himself, by his repeated revelations. As I before remarked upon

the use of *names* in acquiring, and retaining knowledge upon spiritual, and invisible subjects; the mind can have no objects of thought, but by words, and names, as they only distinguish existences from each other, and connect together the properties, attributes, and powers of beings which make up the complex idea of them; for those qualities, &c. when manifested by supernatural displays, and even words explanatory, are images too subtle, and fleeting, for the mind to detain without some *mark* of essence, or name of existence, whereunto it can annex them. This has been the undeviating plan pursued by God when he revealed *new ideas*, designed to be taught to those unto whom the immediate revelation was not primarily made. God's covenant with Adam in Paradise, was in words, with which he had doubtless inspired him with the knowledge of, as he had with the creatures that he had made. After transgression, the promise of the Saviour was in words, as were also the revelations made to Noah, and the promises to Abraham, &c. &c. In the third chapter of Exodus, Moses informs us, that the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, and he looked, and the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed;" (a miraculous, or a supernatural appearance indeed) "and Moses said, I will now turn aside, and *see this great sight*, why the bush is not burnt; and the Lord called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses! Moses! And he said here am I. And he said draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground! Moreover *he said* I am the God of thy Father! the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Here are displayed miraculous appearances; a name is revealed, and words used, explaining the character of him to whom it belonged. Take away the flame of fire out of the midst of the bush which was so miraculous as not to burn it, and on account of which Moses was induced to turn aside, to see that great sight; and also take away the *name of God*, and words explanatory of his character, and we have no revelation at all; or let the flame continue without the name, and words, and it remains only a great sight, without any particular meaning; nor could Moses have gained any in-

struction by gazing upon it. After this revelation, by which God established his name, and character with Moses, he entered into a particular description of the suffering state of Israel under Pharoah, and recognizes them as his chosen, peculiar people, agreeably to the promise made to Abraham. He communicated to Moses that he had appointed him to go, and to bring them out of Egypt. At this Moses was astonished, and asked, "who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And God *said* unto Moses, certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token that I have sent thee; when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." Moses desired to know what he should answer to the Israelites upon their asking him *the name of the God of their Fathers?* "God said unto him, tell them I AM THAT I AM hath sent you."

Moses, in the 4th chapter of Exodus, told God, that they would not hearken unto his voice; for, said he, "they will say, the Lord hath not *appeared unto thee;*" and immediately the power of working miracles was conferred, which Moses was directed to exhibit before the children of Israel, that they might believe that the Lord God of their fathers had appeared unto him. The rod was to be converted into a serpent, and if that did not convince them, his hand was to become leprous by putting it into his bosom, and cured by repeating the same act; and God said, if they will not believe these two *signs*, neither hearken unto thy voice, thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land, and it shall become blood. Moses, on account of an impediment of speech, intimated a difficulty in the discharge of his office. Aaron was appointed, on account of his powers of speech, for God said unto Moses, he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him *instead of God;* that is, Moses should speak unto Aaron as God spake unto Moses, and Aaron to the people. After this, God revealed himself for the first time to Moses by the name of *Jehovah;* saying, "I am the Lord, and I *appeared* unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the *name of God Almighty,* but by my name *Jehovah* was I not

known unto them." This is the same God, who revealed unto Moses, that in the beginning he had created the heavens, and the earth, together with the particular order in which all things were made. I would ask any honest inquirer after truth, whether Moses, by the revelations above made, and those made to his Jewish ancestors in which he was taught; learnt nothing but what he had previously acquired from nature? The very idea of such an opinion is preposterous. As I before observed, the revelation of the *name of God* (for he is not an object of sense—no man hath seen him at any time) often connected with signs, and wonders, and with words explanatory, are the only means by which the world knows any thing about him. The existence, nature, attributes, and sovereignty, of God, thus revealed, by name, are established by sensible manifestation, explained by verbal description, and through tradition, or record, have been handed down through all succeeding ages. We know nothing of the beings designated by the names *God, Devil, Angels, &c.* except by the explanations given in the Scriptures of their natures, characters, situations, and relations. It is by the *custom* of using those names, (as well as every other of a supernatural origin, which was established by repeated revelation,) that they are used as signs of the ideas thus revealed, and have served to communicate to the ages, and generations succeeding the immediate revelations, the ideas, and knowledge of the objects signified. But the characters identified by those names, and the beings to whom they attach, although spiritual, may be easily transposed, and connected with sensible or imaginary objects, and the original acceptation in which they were received, destroyed.

Mr. Locke seems not to have taken sufficiently the nature of language into his original plan. He saw the defect of it but too late, and yet grants enough for my purpose. He observes, "That the mind is as white paper, void of all characters"—has no writings, signatures, or impressions, which are the corner stones of natural religion. "All men in their thinking, and reasoning, make use of words, that is, can neither think or reason without them;" therefore God furnished man with language, and although he had by nature his organs so fashioned, as to be fit to frame articulate

sounds, which we call words, this was not sufficient to produce language. It was also "farther necessary, that he should be able to use these sounds as signs of ideas within his own mind, whereby they might be made known to others, and the thoughts of men's minds be conveyed from one to another." So that without words, men could not understand, learn, or teach any thing that was said upon spiritual subjects. And as "the mind makes words to stand for the real essences of things," it could not, in the absence of things without words, think, distinguish, judge of, or reason upon them; having no marks whereby they could be presented to the intellectual faculties. Whence the extent, and certainty of knowledge, has so near a connection with words, that unless their force, and manner of signification be first well observed, there can be very little said clearly, and pertinently, concerning knowledge;" that is, we could know nothing, be certain of nothing. "And were language, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, the way to knowledge would lie a great deal opener than it does." Certainly; for knowledge is not to be had without the proper instruments, and means to attain it. And language being the only path to wisdom upon spiritual subjects, shews the force of the Apostle Paul's divine philosophy, "That faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Mr. Locke's own observations upon language, touching its necessity, and use, (the truth of which is tested by the experience of every body,) fully refute his observation, "That traditional revelation cannot communicate any other ideas than those derived from nature." Upon this opinion of Mr. Locke is bottomed the theories of all the antichristian philosophers since his day, and, were it true, the ground would be a solid one. To put the refutation of that sentiment beyond all doubt, and to demonstrate by matters of fact, that faith really comes by hearing the word of God, and also to shew the use of language in communicating *new ideas*, not otherwise attainable, I will here state two cases; one of which is taken from those instances which frequently occur in life, of which the reader has probably seen many; the other is extracted from the memoirs of the Academy of Sciences, at Paris.

The first case I derive from persons born blind, in which there is an *entire want* of the organ of sight, but who enjoy the sense of hearing. In this case the perception of light through the eye is entirely, and *necessarily* precluded; without hearing, or verbal description, it would be impossible for them to learn that light existed at all, notwithstanding the exercise of all the other senses; but by it they can learn through instruction by words, and the sense of feeling not only its existence but many of its properties. For the purpose of illustration, it is proposed that I teach one of the above description of persons the existence of light; he is acquainted with the language which is expressive of the objects, and their properties, addressed to the other four senses. I possess the organ of sight, a knowledge of the properties of light, and the language by which they are expressed. The blind person has never heard the word *light* spoken. I take him by the hand, and tell him that there is such a thing as *light*; the word to him is unmeaning, the archetype of which it is the sign being insensible to his mind; he asks me what I mean by the name? for the first inquiry, after the name is given, will, of necessity, be after its properties. I, in the first place, describe it to him negatively; I tell him that it is unlike any thing that he has ever felt or conceived of. I then describe it to him positively; I tell him that I am enabled to walk, run, &c. by its influence, without endangering any injury, and to do an infinite variety of other things. I proceed to prove this to him; I lead him along difficult ways, which are obstructed by many obstacles, and of which I inform him before we reach them. In one direction I tell him is a fence, about a certain number of paces, which I prove to him by leading him to it; in another direction I tell him is a ditch, and which I also lead him to; in another a waggon, a horse, a house, &c. Then I start him off in a run through the woods, and, by leading him, enable him to avoid the trees, and to escape unhurt; after leading him through an intricate way, over hills, and through vallies, for a length of time; the thunder begins to roar, and the wind to blow, indicative of an approaching storm; I tell him that we must return home for shelter, and that, by the influence of *light*, I will soon lead him there; we accordingly

change our course, and after travelling through woods, over fences, and across ditches, we arrive at the place from whence we set out, which he knows by the furniture of the house, and the relative position of the things belonging to it, together with the voices of the persons in it, &c. By all these facts, and circumstances, the word light is not only established in his mind, but to this name he annexes all the properties which have been disclosed. But we are not to stop here; for he is to learn in addition to what I have already taught him, many other things relative to light through the ear, by words. He has been in the habit of eating fruit, and vegetables of different kinds; I tell him that it is by the influence of light that all these have grown; and that without it, if they grew at all, they would be poisonous. I go on still further, and describe to him by words the amazing influence of this light upon men, and birds, and the beasts of the field, in enabling them to devise ways, and means for their subsistence, and safe protection; and also the extensive intercourse which it gives to men who enjoy it, with distant objects, countries, and persons; as it is through, and by the aid of light that we not only see distant objects, but that writing is executed. I describe to him the *great luminary*, the sun, which is the source, and fountain of this influence; and also the moon, and stars, which reflect their borrowed light from him upon our world. I now ask the reader, in the above case, to exclude the word *light*, and the descriptions annexed to it by words, and to say whether all the instruction imparted to the blind man is not destroyed? And to say whether by leading him, and the words I used in my revelation to him, (for such all that instruction may be called which he obtained from me by the influence of light in leading him, and by description in words,) did not communicate new ideas, and knowledge to him? The existence of light is ascertained to him, and many insensible relations of sensible things.

Precisely of the same character, and influence are the revelation of God's word, and the miracles which were wrought, in producing, and imparting the knowledge to our world of spiritual existences, their nature, and attributes; and also in teaching men the insensible relations

which the different objects in the sensible universe sustain — We learn thereby the existence of beings as insensible to our senses as light is to the blind man; and we learn a *relative* character of all things as unknown to *our senses*, as were the growth of vegetables, the perception of distant objects, &c. (which are the effects of light) to the blind man's mind. We learn that all the objects of the sensible universe are *creatures*; we learn their origin, and their several destinies; amongst which are the immortality of man, &c. &c. We learn this by the revelation of the *determinate will* of him who created them. Gracious God! how all-important is thy word to man! *It is the light of the world, and the light of Life!*

I pass on to the case extracted from the *Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences at Paris*.

“The son of a tradesman in Chartres, who had been deaf from his birth, and consequently dumb; when he was twenty three or twenty four years of age, began on a sudden to speak, without its being known that he had ever heard. This event drew the attention of every one, and many believed it to be miraculous.—The young man, however, gave a plain and rational account, by which it appeared to proceed wholly from natural causes. He said that about four months before he was surprised by a *new*, and pleasing sensation, which he afterwards discovered to arise from the ringing of bells; that as yet he heard with one ear, but afterwards a kind of water came from his left ear, and then he could hear distinctly with both; that from this time he listened with the utmost curiosity, and attention to the sounds which accompany those motions of the lips which he had before remarked to convey ideas or meaning from one person to another. In short, he was able to understand them, by noting the thing to which they related, and the action they produced. And after repeated attempts to imitate them when alone, at the end of four months he thought himself able to talk. He therefore, without having intimated what had happened, began at once to speak, and affected to join in conversation, though with much more imperfection than he was aware.

“Many divines immediately visited him, and questioned him concerning God, and the soul, moral good, and evil, and many other subjects of the same kind; but of all this they found him totally ignorant, though he had been used to go to mass, and had been instructed in all the externals of devotion, as making the sign of the cross, looking upwards, kneeling at proper seasons, and using gestures of penitence, and prayer. Of death itself, which may be considered as a sensible object, he had very confused, and imperfect ideas, nor did it appear that he had ever reflected upon it. His life was little more than animal, and sensitive. He seemed to be contented with the simple perception of such objects as he could perceive, and did not compare his ideas with each other, nor draw inferences, as might have been expected from him. It appeared, however, that his understanding was vigorous, and his apprehension quick, so that his intellectual defects must have been caused, not by the barrenness of the soil, but merely by the want of necessary cultivation.”

The above case, (which is analogous to many others that have occurred,) can leave no doubt as to the *manner* of learning things not seen. It proves, to a demonstration, that the first revelations of God, were *immediate*, and *miraculous*, and conveyed by words, and that they have been perpetuated through words ever since; not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. As soon as the man *began to hear*, “*he listened* with the greatest curiosity, and attention, to the *sounds* which accompany those *motions* of the lips” (for before, he could discern nothing but motion,) “which he had before remarked to convey ideas or meaning from one person to another.” In short, he was able to understand them by noting the thing to which they related, and the action they produced, which he learnt (by repeated trials,) to imitate, when alone. Upon spiritual subjects the *motion* of the lips *pointed to no sensible objects*, and of course *he could not note the things* to which they related, nor have any idea of them, until produced through the origin of sound by words, and description. “Faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the word of God:” through faith we understand that the worlds were

framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen (by the eye) “were not made of things which do appear.” “But without faith” (that is, the knowledge imparted, and the belief of things produced by the hearing of the word of God,) “it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is,” (by faith, which is produced by the hearing of the word of God,) “and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” *Creation*, (or the producing something out of nothing, and innumerable beings, at a word, *let it be so*, starting out of nonentity) is no object of reason. Here all things are infinite; and he who can clearly discover the contrivances of omniscience, may also perform the works of omnipotence. The very *hearing* of the word *creation* is by the word of God. The creatures were so far from leading to the creator, that they were the cause of the first, and most universal idolatry, when the world forsook, and denied him. The name of God remained, with an opinion of some superior excellencies belonging to it; but the nature so totally forgot, that they arbitrarily annexed the name to the most glorious of *visible* objects, the sun, moon, and stars, which they accordingly fell down to, and worshipped, as God. Truth never changes but for the worse. Original falsehood is a contradiction, and impossible. An instance of this we have in the name of God; (to which some supremacy, and worship will be annexed,) his proper appellation, *Jehovah*, remained, but turned into a lie, and called Jove; not denoting any truly divine being, but matter, or man, or what every one pleased; for the world had 300 Jupiter Gods, that Euripides might well say, who Jupiter is I know nothing but what fame reports. The same rule will hold good in all cases; if there had not been once a true religion, we could never have heard of false ones: every mode of Gentile worship was some divine institution perverted. This manifests the certainty of a revelation, and the weakness of reason, which was so far from discovering *new truths*, on spiritual, and invisible subjects, that it could not retain the *old ones* it had learned. This appears from its *never recovering them when once lost, but by fresh instruction*. “God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the Fathers.” If God had not vouch-

saved to teach mankind what they ought to *know*, and *do*, both before, and since the fall, we must have been in perfect ignorance of God, and all religion, from the beginning of the world till now. So far from Mr. Locke being correct, and so certain are the scriptures true.

Section 6.

The passages of scripture which are thought to support Natural Religion, examined, and proven to be inapplicable to that purpose.

I AM well aware of the objections which may be made to the principles contended for in the preceding sections of this chapter, derived both from the scriptures, and the ideas which existed amongst some of the Pagan philosophers, long before the coming of Christ. These I will attend to in the present, and succeeding sections. And first to those of scriptural authority. Were it not that I wish every appearance of objection and difficulty dissipated, and not a point left upon which to hang a doubt, I would rest the investigation upon what I have already advanced. The intimate connection between the truths involved in this part of my inquiries, and those which are to be attended to in the second chapter, (of the highest importance) constrain me to bestow a candid attention upon every objection which has the appearance of plausibility or the semblance of reason.

Scriptural authorities in favour of natural religion, would have never been resorted to, had the true character of scripture been rightly apprehended. The distinguishing nature of "*all scripture*" is that it "*is given by inspiration of God,*" "*for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;*" and consequently what is recorded of the ideas and views of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and the Apostles, were actually produced by revelation itself. The principle quotations taken from the scriptures are from the Psalms, and the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. David in the 19th Psalm says, "The Heavens declare the glory

of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works. Day uttereth speech unto day, and night sheweth knowledge unto night." "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Did David know, and declare these things by the knowledge he acquired from nature, or by the inspirations, and revelations of the Holy Ghost? It was by revelation that David knew that the heavens, and the earth sustained the relation he expressed; for it is "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The worlds here, mean the visible fabric, comprehending the sun, moon, stars, and earth, (called by Moses the heavens, and the earth, Gen. 1. 1.) In Hebrews 3. 7. we have further proof that David wrote the Psalms by the inspirations of the Spirit: "Wherefore (says Paul) (as the Holy Ghost saith to-day if ye will hear his voice, &c.) "which in Heb. 4. 7. the Apostle tells us was written by David, and are actually quoted from Psalm 95. 7. Our Lord likewise testifies (Matth. 22. 43.) that David wrote by the inspiration of the Spirit. After having learnt that the resplendent sun, who enlightens, warms, and invigorates the inhabitants of our globe, and reflects his light to other regions; that the distant twinkling stars, the pale moon, and our variegated earth, proceeded from the hands of the great creator, by his almighty power, and infinite wisdom, together with all the order, and the harmony, the majesty, and perfection of the universe; what glory, and honour do they not reflect upon him who is the source of being, and the author of them all! When thus apprehended, not only the sun, moon, and stars, are employed in the annunciation of his being in wisdom, and power, and glory; but all the inferior orders of being join the mighty concert, and mingle their symphonious notes in loudest strains of universal praise! But by whom is this manifestation perceived—by whom are those anthems heard? Not by the stocks, and stones, or the beasts of the field; but by intelligent beings; and for that very reason by those alone who apprehend their relations to the great creator. How different then must have been David's views,

and his capacity for uttering the sentiment expressed in the Psalm, when under the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, from the pagan world, who were without the knowledge of God, and who worshipped the creature instead of the creator! The true source, and character of the sublime ideas uttered by David, will be made still more manifest if we attend a little to his history. We are informed in 1. Samuel, that “the Lord said unto Samuel, I will send thee unto Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons; fill thine horn with oil, and go—and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee; and Samuel went.” After he had examined all Jesse’s sons, but the youngest, and being forbidden of the Lord to anoint either of them; he directed Jesse to send for, and fetch the youngest, David—and when he came, the Lord said arise, and anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, *and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.* David went soon after into the army of Saul, and took an active interest against the uncircumcised Philistian, who had defied the armies of the living God. “And David said unto Saul, this uncircumcised Philistian, who hath defied the armies of the living God, shall be as the lion, and the bear, whom I have slain. The Lord who delivered me from them, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistian.” And David went with his stones, and his sling, to a single combat with the Goliath of Gath, whose very appearance caused the men of Israel to flee with fear. And the Philistian, after ridiculing David, asked him, Am I a dog that thou comest out to me with staves? And the Philistian cursed David by his Gods. “Then, said David,” (by the spirit of the Lord, which had come upon him, for he prophesied,) “this day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistians this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; *that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel;*” which he did accordingly. The same spirit which he received at his anointing, and by the inspirations of which he foretold the fatal issue to the giant, of his personal contest with him, taught him the sublime

sentiment in the 19th Psalm, and it is by the certainty of that inspiration, that what David uttered, and wrote, are called *the Word of God*.

To use the beautiful, poetic description of a writer of the last century, "In order to our entering into the spirit, and divine sublimity of the views uttered in the 19th Psalm, we must form to ourselves the idea of David watching his flocks in a summer's night, under the expanded canopy of the skies, after having spent the day in the contemplation of nature, under the full blaze of the orb of light. The air is still—the heavens are serene—the moon, arrived to the full, is pursuing her majestic, silent course—the stars assume their brightest robes, to attend the beauteous sovereign of the night; while both moon, and stars, concur to shed a soft, undazzling lustre on the subjacent landscape. David, at this happy period, a blameless youth; unpoisoned by ambition; his heart unpolluted with lust; his hands unstained by blood, is seated on a rising hillock, and perhaps by the side of some majestic stream.—All is silent—not a bough rustles—not a leaf trembles to the breeze—the silent flocks are slumbering securely by his side—the birds have suspended their songs, until waked by the superior sweetness of his voice, and the music of his hands: for charmed with the loveliness of the scene, and enjoying, by the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, a full view of the great creator, as he stands connected with his creatures, which awakens in him a seraphic flame of heavenly devotion, he has laid aside his crook—he has taken up his harp—and is transmitting to the throne of God those sublime, and heavenly strains of wonder, love, and praise, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world! So warbled the sweet singer of Israel." I again repeat how different such views, and such devotion, from those of the heathen world, who, having changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, God gave them up to

uncleanness, and they worshipped, and served the creature instead of the creator!

Another objection is taken from the 14th Psalm, to my ideas: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." This scripture has a reference to the moral conduct of man, and is not applicable to the present discussion, except in shewing the natural propensity of man to forget God. That it has a reference to moral conduct is obvious from the connection. "The fool saith in his heart there is no God. They are corrupt; they have *done abominable work*; there is none that *doeth good*. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Corruption produces spiritual blindness, and spiritual blindness corruption.

The second chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the 14th, and 15th verses, are the corner stone of natural religion. They stand thus: For when the Gentiles which have not the Law do by nature the things contained in the Law these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves: which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, &c.

This is one of the many passages of scripture in which the *Word of God* is adduced to prove what the *meaning* of the word will never authorise.

I will, in my observations upon this passage, employ many of the remarks, and arguments of a great Biblical Critic.

The Religion, and Law of Nature, are, by many, cried up with as much noise, and clamour, and perhaps with as little sense too, as the great Goddess Diana was by the Ephesians, when the "greater part" of those who were joined in the cry, "knew not wherefore they were come together." This religion, and law, are said to be eternal by many—that it is so exceeding clear in its principles, as to be the only true light "that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." It is so universal in its extent, that it comprehends the whole race of mankind, &c. Now all these assertions seem to me very shocking positions, not only incapable of

being reconciled to the word of God, but of fatal tendency to strengthen the hands of those that oppose it.—And in fact we find that the keenest arrows that have been shot against christianity, have been drawn from this quiver. What some very good men have made the only foundation of our faith, other very bad men perhaps with less inconsistency, made the principle foundation of their infidelity. And if our divines will still tell them that unless all the great things contained in their Law of Nature are first known, and believed, the revelation of God himself can signify nothing; we cannot, I think, much wonder, that they should now at last tell our divines, that where all these great things are first known, and believed, revelation can signify little. For the very end of revelation, as I have frequently before observed, is to discover to us by a supernatural light from heaven, those things, and truths which we are naturally ignorant of, and not the truths which we naturally know.

I must here tell the reader in the plainest terms, that the passage of scripture above quoted, as the text from which natural religion is so often preached, *is an erroneous translation*; is contrary to the analogy of the scriptures, and directly opposed to the Apostle's meaning; and it is owing to an improper pointing in the original. When properly pointed, and literally translated, it stands thus: "When the Gentiles which have not the Law by nature, *do* the things contained in the Law, &c. The words thus arranged, are strong, and beautiful, and the sense of them plain, and obvious. I now proceed to prove by Paul himself, that the translation in our bibles is erroneous, and that the one above is correct. The Gentiles, according to the interpretation in the 14th, and 15th verses of the 2nd chapter of Romans, were those very Gentiles who continued under that apostacy, and revolt from God, which the first Gentiles in the preceding chapter began. Read over the large catalogue of stupendous sins to which the first Gentiles were abandoned by God upon their apostacy from him; and then compare them, and try if it is possible that those Gentiles who persevered in this apostacy from the true God could deserve to be in any sense capable of that character which St. Paul gives them in the text. The former description presents us

with a ghastly scene of the greatest enormities that man can commit; the latter expresses, in a few words, the height of piety, and goodness. We are to recollect that St. Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, sent "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." The Gentiles in the text must be either those who were converted, or those who still "sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death," under the dominion of the Devil, "without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world." If they were Gentiles by nature, who were converted to Christ, the character which Paul gives them in the verses under consideration, is consistent with every text in scripture, which speaks of the first converts in as high terms; but if they were still under the power of Satan, you may as soon reconcile light, and darkness, Christ and Belial together, as to make the received interpretation of this passage consistent either with common sense or the Word of God.

What are the things contained in the Law? Is not the very first, and greatest commandment of all, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me?" Is not the second "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image.—Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them?" Could the Gentiles, before they were converted, and turned from idols to serve the living God who made heaven, and earth, do the things contained in this Law? To say they could is a glaring contradiction.

Moses tells us "that whoever sacrificeth unto God save unto Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed." And were the Gentiles, who Paul says, "sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God," the very same Gentiles who, the same Apostle tells us, "did the things contained in the Law?" It is absolutely impossible. But here it may be said that these laws were given to the Israelites only, and not to the Gentiles. I own it, and I plead for it: the strength of my argument against the boasted law of nature is from this irresistable, and the astonishing weakness of the plea for natural religion from the passage demonstrable. "God had shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes, and judgments unto Israel; but he had not dealt so with any other nation, neither had the

heathen any knowledge of his laws." No; it was in Judah only that God himself was known, his name was great in Israel; whereas all the gods of the nations were idols.

But where then, in the mean time, was this boasted Law of Nature, or what was the light thereof, which, during this long period of pagan darkness, could not distinguish an idol from the living God, nor the creature from the creator? And shall we be still told that natural religion is the foundation of that which is revealed? So that where the being, and attributes of God, and other great points of morality, are not first known by the light of nature, revelation itself can signify nothing; and that it is ridiculous, in all respects ridiculous, to pretend to prove these things by revelation? How comes it that an argument from the mouth of God shall be thought ridiculous, which in the mouth of a modern philosopher, and natural religionist, of a Voltaire, a Volney, a Paine, &c. shall carry the force of demonstration? Is not the Bible as good a book, and as sufficient too, for the conviction of an Atheist, as their writings? Cannot God, the Almighty Being, reveal himself to them that knew him not, discover himself to them that ask not after him? What! was not Christ then in truth "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," who knew not God? Or did he not indeed send his Apostles to open the eyes of these blind Pagans, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?"

The great Apostle of the Gentiles had converted many thousands of them to the faith of Christ; but in every Epistle which he writes to confirm them in this faith, he never fails to remind them of the deplorable state they were in before their conversion to it. They were then "without strength, the servants of sin, and enemies in their mind by wicked works;" nay, they were even "dead in sins," and by nature the children of wrath, even as others." And is it possible that they could at the same time do, and that by nature too, the things contained in the Law? He tells them, that before their conversion, they lived as other Gentiles live, "in fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence," and all those sins "for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." And

were they at that time a sufficient law unto themselves? He reminds them that “in times past they walked as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life *through the ignorance that is in them*, because of the blindness of their hearts, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” And can the wildest, and most superstitious imagination, believe that the same Apostle could affirm, that they did, at that time, “shew the work of the Law written in their hearts?” What a load of absurdities, and contradictions, does this single misinterpretation throw upon the great Apostle St. Paul? And yet, how greedily has it been caught at by some learned men to advance a favourite notion, which is inconsistent with, and plainly contradicted in, almost every passage of scripture; and which is demonstrably erroneous, from the very nature, and necessity of things. So far from Paul once thinking of this strange Law of Nature; so far from once speaking one single word in its favour; so far from asserting that the invisible things of God could ever be discovered by the bare light of nature, that he not only affirms over, and over, that “the Gentiles knew not God;” but moreover proves too that they never could have known him unless God in his infinite mercy had first sent his Apostles to preach, and reveal him unto them. This, in St. Paul’s judgment, was the only mean by which God could ever be found of them who sought him not, or be made manifest to them that asked not after him. It is somewhat surprising that good christians should differ so widely from him;—in this they have erected the very citadel of infidelity. They deny the fact, that it is by the revelations of God’s spirit *in words*, or that it is by the *Word of God* that the human race, circumstanced as they are, acquire the *name, and knowledge of God*—his character, and future purposes concerning them;—and they assert that the natural powers of the human mind, *without spiritual light*, can have spiritual perceptions, and thereby deny that the human mind is dependent upon God’s word for spiritual ideas; (the world has not so learnt God through Jesus Christ.) It is on this account that revelation, the sole conveyer of spiritu-

al knowledge, has so long hung down its head, and human reason exercised upon the things which are *seen, and are only temporal*, has been placed, by christians too, in schools of learning, and elsewhere, in the chair of infallibility, as the inventor, and arbiter of things divine. This has been greatly owing to a strong prepossession long handed down, (even from the days of *Platonic Christianity*,) which the religious world had conceived in favour of *common notions, innate ideas*, and the like.

The Jews were born under the Law, and so they had the Law by nature, that is, from their very birth, which the Gentiles had not; and it should be remembered that "we who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles," are the very words of our Apostle himself; and yet it would be the height of absurdity to affirm of the best Jews that ever lived, that they did by nature the things contained in the Law." But to affirm this of the Gentiles is the very first born of contradictions, and that whether they were converted to Christ or not: for if they were converts to the faith of Christ, it was certainly by grace, and not by nature, that they "did the things contained in the Law;" but if they were not converts, but still "servants to sin, and under the power of Satan," it was impossible they should do them at all, or even "shew the works of the Law written in their hearts." So that, let this sentence be racked, and tortured to any possible degree, in the present position of the words, as they now stand in our translation, the wit of man can never extract common sense out of it, or force it to speak any thing which will not be a flat contradiction to the whole scripture.

God had spoken of a new covenant that he would make in the latter days, when there should be no longer difference between Jew, and Gentile; but, in the words of the prophet Joel, "whoever should call upon the name of Jehovah should be saved." Upon which the Apostle immediately breaks out in those remarkable words: "How then 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? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Gentiles of

whom the Apostle speaks were converts to christianity, and were made so by his preaching. They did the works of the law, that is, the moral duties of it, by the obedience of faith, without the rites, and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law.

Paul's chief object in his Epistle to the Romans, was to prove that the Gospel reveals a righteousness unknown to the Law, which is derived solely from faith, and to which Jews, and Gentiles had an equal claim. In order to prove this, he shews that both Jews, and Gentiles are under sin; that is, that God will impute sin to both, and that the only possible righteousness which is practicable, and acceptable, is a righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ.

The passage under consideration is thought not only to afford a strong objection to the necessity of revelation in teaching the knowledge of God, but also to place the moral sense of right, and wrong upon natural principles, and not on the revelation of God's will as the rule of obedience, and the test of truth, and righteousness. The connection stands thus: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law by nature," (I use the correct translation here,) "do the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; *which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.* If what natural religionists call *natural conscience* is meant here, and is so intended by Paul, what are we to think of this Doctor of the Law, who has told us by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, that when persecuting the christians, he did it with no less conscientiousness than zeal?

Conscience is the judgment which the mind forms of its own acts; and it approves or disapproves as the conduct agrees or disagrees with the principle or rule which it *thinks* right. To assert that *nature* dictates what is morally right, is to assert a power of judgment without knowledge, and of righteous decision without a rule, or to restrict the rule of right to temporal concerns only, both in its origin, and extent. A case may be fairly made between the Jews, and Jesus Christ.—The Saviour most conscientiously did, and suffered the will of his Father, in being spit upon, scourged, and crucified—the Jews inflicted upon him the ignominious

sufferings of the Cross, but they did it ignorantly, and many of them, no doubt, conscientiously; and very probably their zeal was greatly heightened by the five first verses of the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy. Paul was very conscientious in aiding Stephen's death, and in the persecution of the christians' in general. Stephen was equally conscientious in yielding to the stroke of death under the fierce peltings of the raging mob. The conscience of Paul, in this transaction, was governed by the blind bigotry of Jewish superstition, while that of Stephen was governed by the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The conscience of Paul soon after this murderous scene, exhibits as striking a contrast to its former character, as it was different from Stephen's. After his conversion to christianity, he suffered many things *for conscience sake*, in earnestly contending for the christian faith, in behalf of which Stephen died; and finally died himself in support of the truth, which before he had conscientiously opposed. Hence the difference between enlightened, and ignorant consciences. As I have before observed, the passage under consideration has reference to the Gentile converts in the Church of Rome, and elsewhere, unto whom the Jewish law never was given; for, says Paul, in another part of his Epistle to the Romans, "I could wish myself accused from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, (or, as the translation would perhaps be better, "be separated from Christ *instead* of my brethren,") who are Israelites, *to whom pertained the giving of the law.*" Paul's doctrine was, that by the works of the Law no man could be saved, and that faith was the only mean of justification, and salvation. The Gentiles under the Gospel dispensation, who have not the Law of Moses by nature, are conscientious in obeying the law of faith, or the gracious Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by this means they shew the works of the Law, (consisting in the service of the one only, and true God, God whom they were ignorant until taught by Paul; for how could they believe in, or serve him of whom they had not heard? &c.) written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, (governed in its decisions by the rule of the Gospel,) and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. But it seems that *their thoughts*

accused or else excused one another; it is as impossible for a mind to think without an object to think about, as it is to create something out of nothing. The Gentiles could no more think of God, or the duties he required *as such*, without knowledge, than they could believe in him of whom they had not heard, or hear without a preacher, or some person to teach them. That the Apostle had an eye to the distinction above taken, between the Jews, and Gentiles, is further evident from the passage itself, by leaving out the parenthesis in which the quotation is found. The connection then stands thus: "For there is no respect of persons with God; for as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, *according to my Gospel;*" (not according to the laws of nature.) The consciences, of course, which are established upon the Gospel, are qualified for accusing or else excusing, in consistency with the judgment of God by Jesus Christ at the last day. The Gospel gives no other rule for judging than the Gospel itself. "He that believeth" (in Jesus Christ) "shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Conscience may be conformable, or repugnant to truth; it is, consequently, no certain rule of moral rectitude, even when it feels certain, because the certainty of an opinion is no proof of its being a right one. It is a maxim of every law, both human, and divine, that a man ought never to act in *opposition to* his conscience; but it will not from these follow, that he will, in obeying the dictates of his conscience on all occasions, act right. A thousand crimes may follow the dictates of conscience; and their perpetrators may even have the complacency of conscience at their expiring moments. But this their conscientious composure can be no proof to others of the rectitude of their principles, and ought to be no pledge to themselves of their innocence in adhering to them. It was with a view to such delusions of conscience, that our blessed Lord told his disciples that "the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." All the bloody persecutions which have souled the christian name, and all that party spirit which issues in bitter recrimi-

nation amongst the different denominations of christians, their intolerance, and uncharitableness towards one another, proceed from the same source. Such conscientious conduct, although professing to have the defence of truth for its only object, is itself most injurious to its interests. That is the only unerring rule of judgment by which the conscience can in righteousness accuse or else excuse, which consists in the conformity of the ideas of the mind with the word of God, both in letter, and spirit.

One other scriptural authority in favour of natural religion is derived from the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans; which is thought by the Christian Philosopher to prove that *the things of God* are known without the revelations of God's spirit. It stands thus in our translation: "For the invisible things of him (*God*, taken from v. 19.) from the creation of the world, *are clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." The unhappy effects of dividing the scriptures into verses, which was a plan of human device, for the purpose of reference only, and of erroneous pointing in the original, appear in but few instances more evident than in the present. By such arbitrary conduct, sentences are broken, and their meaning subverted; from whence have arisen erroneous apprehensions of scripture, and *unrighteous conscientious decisions*. I will transcribe so much of the connection as is necessary for a correct view of the Apostle's meaning, in which I will use Doctor Dwight's translation; wherein he has pointed the verse a little differently from its common reading. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith," (or, as Macknight renders it, for the righteousness of God *by faith* is revealed in it, (the Gospel) in order to faith,) "as it is written the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them," (or amongst them.) "For the invisible things from

the creation of the world, (Dr. Dwight's translation) *being understood, are clearly seen in the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead.* So that they are without excuse, &c." This translation makes the Apostle's meaning quite intelligible, and perfectly consistent with every other part of his writings.

The invisible things *being understood*, are clearly seen in the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead; for that which *may be known of God*, is made manifest; for God hath shewed it—not by nature, for the world by wisdom never knew him. It cannot, but by the most forced construction, be said, that this part of Paul's Epistle, justifies the opinion that the Gentiles knew God without revelation; but a conclusion by the fairest, and most correct reasoning of a directly opposite character is evident. He says, "that *which may be known of God is manifest to them* (or amongst them,) for *God hath shewed it unto them;*" (not by nature without revelation,) plainly implying what was before observed, viz. that the previous knowledge of God was necessary to idolatry, upon the same principle that a false religion pre-supposes a true one. When was God known to exist without faith, that faith which cometh by hearing, and that hearing which is produced by the Word of God? "To the Law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. 8. 20. I ask, by whom are the invisible things of God, "even his eternal power, and Godhead," clearly seen, and understood? Are they, by any but those to whom they have been shewed? Did Paul himself see, and understand them, before he had the vision, and heard the voice on his way to Damascus? He says not. It was then that he, for the first time, knew the second person in the Godhead. Paul had persecuted those who believed in the Godhead often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme against the Almighty; and this he did in all good conscience before God. The Lord said unto Paul, (when lying on the ground, prostrated by the refulgence which overwhelmed him,) rise, and stand on thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose; to make thee a minister,

and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, (in another place, seen, and heard,) and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to *open their eyes*, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Paul then went, and preached every where to Jews, and Gentiles, that they should repent, and *turn to God*, and do works meet for repentance. This same Paul (when in the situation of the Gentiles, who the natural religionists think did the law by nature,) says himself, in this same Epistle to the Romans, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." He died to the Law, and was made alive to Christ by faith. Again, Paul testifies, "that no man knoweth the things of God but the spirit of God; which things the spirit hath revealed;" "for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." In the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it is said of some of John's disciples, that they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost; so far from the poor, ignorant, idolatrous Gentiles, understanding the things of God, even his eternal power, and Godhead, *without having shewed them unto them* by his spirit. Zacharias, when prophecying, said "that God had spoken by the mouths of his prophets which have been since the world began." We ought not to forget that Paul, before the time of writing his Epistle to the Romans, like David, (before he wrote the 19th Psalm,) received the Holy Ghost, and was instructed both by external revelation, and inspiration, under whose divine illuminations he wrote.

In closing this Section I, cannot help calling the attention of the reader, to notice the perfect coincidence between the principles established in the previous Sections of this chapter, touching the incapacity of the human mind to form ideas of spiritual things, or to think about, or form names for, them, without revelation; and the true doctrines of the scriptures, and their practical effects in imparting

knowledge to our world, upon those subjects which were otherwise unknown.

Section 7.

The opinions which existed amongst the Heathen Philosophers relative to a God, the immortality of the soul, &c. which are relied on in favour of natural religion, investigated; and traced to revelation as their source.

I now proceed to the examination of the notions which existed amongst the philosophers of Greece, and Rome, relative to the being of a God, &c. before the coming of Christ; on which great stress is placed in favour of natural religion. And here let it be observed, that one of the strongest presumptions imaginable in favour of the fact, that it was from *traditional revelation*, that those ancient philosophers obtained their ideas, and notions of a God, &c. is in the reference made to that period of the world in favour of the *natural* origin of those ideas. Is it not as easy to shew their natural origin in our day by a direct reference to facts, and consciousness as to trace them into Pagan antiquity? Are not the principles of nature, and the powers of the mind, as intelligible since Boyle, Bacon, Newton, and Locke, finished their investigations, and as open to the understandings of men now, as they were in the ages of Pagan darkness, and idolatry? Or is it a principle in *Natural Theology*, that the more ignorant men are of every thing else, the better they are qualified for the discernment of a God, and the soul's immortality: and, on the contrary, the more improved their minds, and enlarged their knowledge upon nature, mind, &c. the less are they qualified for discovering spiritual things? There can be no point in philosophy more undeniable than this; that whatever knowledge men discover by a rational procedure, they are able to prove or shew by what train of reasoning they made out the deduction. Yet the heathens could never do this, in any divine article; nor have any of the modern philosophers been more successful. The Egyptians, it is alledged, first conceived their natural idea of

a spiritual, superintendent existence from the overflowing of the Nile. It will, I suppose, be admitted, that as soon as the real natural cause was discovered, this spiritual conception vanished. Does' it not appear far more natural to suppose, that the Egyptians, having previously learnt by tradition the existence of a spiritual being, to whom creation, and a superintendence were ascribed, would apply his immediate agency to every thing which they did not understand, or were unable to account for? Without this antecedent knowledge, it is utterly inconceivable how such an application could be made. It would have been the necessary order of things for them to attribute those phenomena which they could not explain, to principles which their ignorance had hitherto precluded their understanding of, had they not have learnt the existence of a superintendent invisible being.

That the Grecian, and Roman philosophers had some imperfect notions of a God, and a future state of being, is evident; the only point to be settled is, from whence they got them. That they were not formed by deductions from nature, is evident, from what I have previously demonstrated in respect to the limited powers of the human mind. An invincible proof of the same truth is, that the very reasons by which they attempt to support the belief of a future existence, are palpably false. I consider it a self-evident truth, that no idea or opinion which is in itself correct, could ever have been formed from principles essentially erroneous; and especially so when it is asserted that those erroneous principles formed the only basis of the just conclusion. As is remarked by one of the most splendid geniuses of the last age, "the Socrateses, Platos, and Ciceroes of Greece, and Rome, although pretending to have some belief of a future state of being, evidently indulged that opinion upon the chimerical notions of the pre-existence of the human souls, their successive transmigration from body to body, their being literally particles of Deity whom they supposed to be the *anima mundi*, the universal soul of the world, &c. All these premises want the support of proper evidence, and matters of fact; and some of them are directly subversive of the proper notion of a future state, as a state of rewards, and punishments. Socrates was confessedly the

wisest character in the heathen world, and is proclaimed a martyr for the cause of virtue, and truth; and yet he, when making his defence before his judges, speaks in the language of perplexed uncertainty. "Death," says he, "either reduces us to nothing, and entirely destroys all sense, and consciousness, or, as *some say*, (mark the expression) it conveys us from this world into another region." Thus standing on the brink of eternity; he was not assured whether he was not about to leap into the gulph of annihilation. "As some say," (said he, a proof of traditional information) "death carries us into another region." What an erroneous saying that was? Death carries us to the grave, and the God who made us gives us future life! When he was condemned, his last words to the court were these: "It is time for us to part; I, that I may suffer death; and you, that you may enjoy life; but which of us has the happiest lot is known only to the Gods. Poor Socrates! how happy hadst thou been hadst thou but enjoyed one glimmering of that heavenly light which the most ignorant christian enjoys; how wouldst thou have triumphed! But these things were concealed from the wise and prudent, and *revealed* unto babes. Jesus Christ, the son of righteousness, who abolished death, and brought life, and immortality to light, had not yet arisen. Some obscure intimations had been given to the Pagan world through the patriarchs, and prophets, by the "spirit of Christ which was in them when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and *the glory that should follow.*" (1 Pet. 1. 11.) Correspondent with this idea, we hear Plato say in his Alcibiad, "that it is necessary a Lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us. And such a one I do expect, and O how greatly do I desire to see that man? This Lawgiver must be more than man, who is to teach man more than man could know by his own nature—he must be of a nature that is superior to man, that is of a divine nature." He gives as lively a description of the person, qualifications, life, and death of this divine personage, as if he had copied the 53d chapter of Isaiah; for he says, "That this just person must be poor, and void of all recommendations, but that of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not hear his instructions, and reproof, and therefore

within three or four years after he began to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last put to death." De. Repub. 1. 2. Plato, in another place, confesses that he did not come to a knowledge of God, &c. by his own discovery, but (as did Socrates) *by hear say*; he frankly tells where, and from whom he received each article; yet verily believed them to be true. He calls them Syrian, and Phœnician fables, or traditions, but ineffable as containing mysteries above his comprehension, and derives the very existence of the Gods from their information. Philebus. p. 16. His example alone sufficiently demonstrates that no man can go further in supernatural truths, than he has a borrowed light to direct him, and such was the confession of every philosopher. Grotius calls the survivance of souls a most ancient tradition, derived from our first parents. Whence also, says he, should it come to almost all civilized nations. Our inquiries into the means of attaining knowledge, *grounded on the true plan of nature, the authority of scripture, the experience of all ages, and the confession of the wisest heathens, and christians*, shews, that in whatever light we place things, an infant mind wants nurture, as well as an infant body; which nothing but instruction, and that originally from God, can supply. The advocates of natural religion are therefore called upon to shew when, where, and by whom, *any* belief of the true God, and the duties owing to him, were seen, and understood prior to, and without any benefit from revelation. If the world ever was without the name of God to which some sense of religion must be annexed, let them prove it, or tell how men could be said to find out what they learned from their Fathers? And if the wiser heathens disclaimed their coming at such knowledge by any use of their faculties; whether to affirm what they deny themselves be not arrogance, and falsehood. Were an universal rule of acting imprinted on nature, interwoven with our very beings, every one must be as conscious of it, as of his own existence; and as soon forget to see, or hear, or walk, as these self-existent truths, congenite with, spontaneously springing up, and *cut deep in the heart*. Let one city, or one man, be produced as an example of knowing or believing these things without

instruction, and the question shall be yielded. It does not mend the matter to glean a few detached sentences scattered up, and down the ancient writings, how charming soever they may be, and then cry out, behold the strength of reason!

The writings of no one of the Pagan philosophers can be produced, but what exhibit a thousand glaring absurdities, falsehoods, and contradictions; the few bright sayings interspersed amongst them are nothing more than flashes of lightning, which may amaze, but not direct the benighted traveller: and only prove that they *heard* of subjects which they did not *understand*; and *repeated names*, the true import of which they never *knew*.

As is observed by the president of New-Haven College, "All nations besides the Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, have been unable to give any account of their religion, any further than, that they *received it from tradition*."

A leading principle of Plato was, that the divine nature was diffused through all the human soul, and that the faculty of reason was an emanation of God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the principles, and elements of all truth human, and divine. Unless we go to the creation of man, ("and God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul,") which Plato learned by tradition, or to the divine inspirations of the patriarchs, and prophets, no archetype of this opinion of Plato can be found, nor any possible way conceived of by which he could have originated the idea.

So much has been said about revelation in acquiring the knowledge of God, which is the foundation of all religion, that little need be added on other subjects. A *resurrection* from the dead, and the soul's *immortality*, are the ground works of all reasoning about futurity; and if not clearly discoverable, natural law can avail but little; it being *an eternity to come*, that makes religion so awful, and its motives so powerful.

As to a resurrection, it was ever looked upon as an article incredible, and impossible. The Stoics, and Epicureans thought it strange, and despised it. (Acts 17.) Pliny says, God cannot do all things, neither recal the dead, nor

make mortal creatures immortal. And Celsus declares it the hope of worms, a filthy, abominable, impossible thing, which God neither will or can do.

Of the soul's immortality, it may be said, that as the divine power, and goodness, are the only stability of things by which all created beings are brought into existence, and enjoy a continuance of it; so whether they shall be annihilated or have a permanence through all eternity, depends wholly on the will of God; and what he will do cannot be learnt but from revelation. The soul is not in itself necessarily immortal; were it so, it would never cease to be, but would be God. As the creator is a being of infinite liberty in all his purposes, and actions, it is impossible to know his future designs with respect to his creatures but by the declaration of his own will, by himself. As all things beyond the grave are, to nature, utterly unknown, the arguments attempted to be derived from her are surreptitious, and false, concerning futurity. Immortality was an *hearsay*. Of a future state, whose extremes of happiness or misery so closely bind the soul of man, the opinions of the Pagan world were equally vague, and contradictory; some broken remains of antiquity carried down the river of time, sadly defaced, and ridiculously disguised (but what none could rectify) composed all they knew. Yet, says a great Bishop, "what bears, and wolves, and devils, would men prove to one another, without the belief of rewards, and punishments in another life? These things are only knowable by revelation; to that are owing humanity, and civility, as well as *right* reason, and religion. And because the voice of it is but little heard, and perhaps less regarded, there are many wolves, and devils amongst the human family."

The only foundation for the belief in a future existence is in the explicit declaration of God himself, procured, illustrated, and proven by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is thought by some that Paul designed to *prove* the resurrection of the body after death by the corn growing from the seed. This mistake consists in taking an *illustration* for a proof. His reasoning is as follows: "If Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished"

(not as the corn, which grows again). "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *first fruits* of them that sleep; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order." Let us examine how far natural indications are made of a future existence of the body from its death, and whether any analogical reasoning can be drawn from the growth of corn to aid us in the discussion. The subsequent crop of corn is in its nature, and properties, similar to the seed which were sown; but, Paul says, with respect to our bodies, this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; and that flesh, and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. To shew the entire difference between the body that dies, and that which shall be raised, he observes, that the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a *natural* body, it is raised a *spiritual* body. Are there any facts in nature which teach or intimate ideas like these? When we sow a field with corn, the natural order is the production of a crop of a like nature, with the grain put into the ground—the seed rots, and supplies the *germinative* part with food in its early growth; but who would expect to increase the population of a country, or of the universe, by killing the inhabitants of the earth? The resurrection of the body, and future existence of the soul, resolve themselves entirely into the *will of God*, which has been expressed through, and by Jesus Christ. Man is not *necessarily* immortal; and, I again repeat it, he is only so by the power, and will of God. And how is that will to be known while the state of immortality itself is concealed from the mind of man, except by supernatural instruction? Christ has abolished death, and brought life, and immortality to light, through the Gospel. Surely no one will say that the light of the Gospel is a natural light. It is desirable to know from the natural religionist, by what astronomical calculation; the solution of what problem; the demonstration of what proposition; or by what experiment upon matter; or the hard, and soft solids of the human body;

or by what appearance in the intellectual operations; or by what principle or fact in experimental philosophy, it has been learnt that God at any time designed to send his Son to die as the great propitiatory sacrifice, and by which death should be swallowed up in victory—that we should, (though corruptible, and mortal by nature,) be, by virtue of his death, changed into incorruption, and clothed with immortality; and though our body should be sown a natural body, it should be raised a spiritual one? The capacities of every thing with which we are acquainted, are limited. The eye can only see by the aid of light, and the ear hear by the influence of sound; neither can the mind acquire the knowledge of God, or his future will, any other way than by revelation. The Jews, who had revelation, when ignorant, in arts, and sciences, possessed the most pure, spiritual, and sublime ideas of God; whilst the philosophers of Greece, and Rome, though highly polished, and greatly advanced in the knowledge of arts, and science, babbled like children upon all spiritual subjects.

Some idea may be formed of the state of Grecian ignorance, even amongst the Athenians, upon these subjects, by attending to a part of Paul's history, (taken from Acts 17.) "Now, while Paul waited for them, (Silas, and Timotheus) at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the Synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain of the philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks encountered him. And some said what will this babler say? other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of *strange Gods, because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.* And they took him, and brought him before the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this *new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean.* Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-Hill, and said; Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye *ignorantly worship,* him declare I unto you: God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth.

dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood, all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and men's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained whereof he hath given assurance (or offered faith,) unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked and others said we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed —among the which was Dyonisius the Areopagite;" and some others. The certain strange things which Paul brought to the ears of the Athenians, and which they thought was the setting forth of strange Gods, and which they called this new doctrine whereof thou speakest was, amongst other things, the resurrection from the dead, which, when they heard of, they mocked him. Another part of the new doctrine which Paul taught was "*the unknown God*" in whom they who were ignorant of him lived, and moved, and had their being. This disciple of Gamaliel, and Apostle to the Gentiles, adopted the very plan of instruction, in unfolding his new doctrine to the Athenians before the Areopagus, by which Dyonisius, one of that body, was converted, which has been so often repeated, as constituting the one by which alone the ideas, and knowledge taught by revelation can be communicated. First, he pointed them to the altar with this inscription, *To the unknown God*. He availed himself of this inscription, which, on account of their ignorance, communicated no appropriate idea, the city being wholly given to

idolatry, and told them, that HE, whom they ignorantly worshipped, him declared he unto them. God (said he) that made the world, and the things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with man's hands as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, &c. that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. From the preceding statement, both *the name of God*, and the delineation of character which he so minutely drew by description, he deduces the following conclusion, which flows necessarily from the premises: "For as much, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device." By way of extenuation for this their idolatrous conduct, the necessary consequence of their then benighted state of mind, in regard to divine truth, and to avoid a censure which might rouse their indignation, and excite them to violence upon his person, as well as to preserve access to their minds; in short, using the subtlety of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, he observes, "And the times of this ignorance God (to you the unknown God, and whom I declare unto you,) winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent, (and the most weighty reason, and powerful incentive to which is,) *because* he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, (or offered them faith, in the margin) in that he hath raised him from the dead;" a proof entirely supernatural, and consisted in a matter of fact, and by which the same Apostle, in another place, says this same Jesus Christ our Lord was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness.

I will conclude this Section by subjoining the critical remarks, and observations of the learned Macknight, in proof of the traditional preservation of early revelations; of many, too, which are not recorded in the scriptures, only as having

been handed down by tradition, through oral communications, from one generation to another: And also to prove that the Jewish nation (or a part of them,) anticipated the resurrection of the dead, under the covenant made by God with Abraham.

His observations are as follow: "Abraham and his descendants understood the promise of God in the covenant which he made with him to give to him (Abraham) and his seed the everlasting possession of Canaan, to mean not only the giving them the earthly Canaan, but also the everlasting possession of an heavenly country—and that they understood the promise in no otherwise, is evident from this, that the Israelites, from the earliest times, entertained a strong hope of the resurrection of the dead, founded on the covenant with Abraham. This the Psalmist, speaking of the wicked, saith, Psal. 49. 14. *"Like sheep they are laid in the grave—and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. Their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me."* Wisdom of Solomon, 3. 4. *"Though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality."* What a strong belief of the resurrection of the just, and of the retributions of an after life, founded on the covenant with Abraham, the latter Jews entertained, we may learn from the history of the seven brethren, with their mother, who were put to death by Antiochus, for refusing to taste swine's flesh? 2 Mac. 7. 9. *The second, when he was at the last gasp, said, thou, like a fury, takest us out of this present life; but the king of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, to everlasting life.* And that they expected this resurrection to everlasting life, by virtue of the covenant with Abraham, and not in consequence of any natural principle, or necessity of nature, appears from the words of the youngest of these brethren, verse 36. *For our brethren who now have suffered a short pain, are dead under God's covenant of everlasting life.* I ask, what covenant of everlasting life did God ever make with the Jews, under which they could die, unless it be the covenant with Abraham, in which he promised, with an oath, to give to him, and his seed the land of

Canaan, for an everlasting possession? Farther, that the Jews derived their hope of the resurrection from the covenant with Abraham; may be gathered from their expecting the resurrection of the just only. This our Lord, speaking of the resurrection, according to the opinion which the Jews entertained of it, calls it, Luke xiv. 14. *The resurrection of the just.* In like manner, the fourth of the seven brethren mentioned above, said to the persecutor, 2. Mac. 7. 14. *As for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection of life.* So also Josephus, speaking of the opinion of the Pharisees, says, Atiq. xv. 17. 2. "They believe that there are retributions 'under the earth to such as have attached themselves to virtue or vice in this life; and that the one are condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and that the other have an easy 'return to life.'" To this notion of the resurrection, the Jews were naturally led, by the covenant with Abraham, in which the everlasting possession of Canaan, in its second, and highest meaning, was promised to the spiritual seed only; that is, to believers of all nations, who, in the covenant, are counted to Abraham, for seed by faith. That the Jews, from the earliest times, expected the resurrection of the dead, and derived their hope of that resurrection from the covenant with Abraham, is attested in the most express manner by the Apostle Paul, who scrupled not to say to Festus, and king Agrippa, in the hearing of the chiefs of the Jews, Acts 26. verse 6. *And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers—7. unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.* But to what promise, made to the Fathers, did the twelve tribes hope to come, which they were not in the possession of, at the time the Apostle said this, unless it was the promise in the covenant, that God would raise Abraham's seed by faith from the dead, to possess the heavenly country of which Canaan was the emblem. Accordingly, to shew that that was the promise which the Apostle had in his eye, he immediately added, *for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.* 8. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?* The same Apostle openly affirmed, in the hearing of Felix, and of the

Jewish council, that the resurrection of the dead is a thing written in the Law, and the Prophets. Acts xxiv. 14. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets. 15. And have hope towards God, which they also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and of the unjust. But the resurrection of the dead is nowhere written in the Law of Moses, except in the covenant with Abraham, where God promised to count Abraham's faith for righteousness, and to give to him and his seed the everlasting possession of Canaan. And, with respect to the Prophets, the resurrection of the dead is not written by them in any otherwise than as they have foretold the accomplishment of the promises in the covenant, according to their second, and highest meanings, by speaking of them as the accomplishments of those promises, according to their first, and literal meaning. For example, Isaiah hath foretold the multiplication of Abraham's spiritual seed, by the great increase of his natural progeny. Chapt. 49. 18—26. Chapt. 54. 1—3. Chapt. 60. 1—5. And the conversion of the natural seed to the faith of the Gospel, and their salvation by their resurrection to the land of Canaan. Chapt. 51. 9—16. Chapt. 52. 9—12. And their happiness in their converted state, by the building and adorning its cities. Chapt. 61. 4, 5, 6. And the excellency of the heavenly country, by the creation of a new heaven, and a new earth, for the habitation of the natural seed; in which new earth there is to be neither pain nor sorrow. Chapt. 65. 17—20. The prevalence of the hope of the resurrection of the dead, among the Israelites, in the earliest times, may be understood from this well known fact, that the nations who sprang from Abraham by Hagar, and Keturah, entertained the same hope, and communicated it to their neighbours; so that the resurrection of the dead, in one shape or other, was believed by the greatest part of the inhabitants of the East. Hence Job, who was an Arabian, expressed his hope of the resurrection in the strongest terms. Chapt. xix. 25. "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; 26. and though, after my skin, worms

destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; 27. whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not for another, though my reins be consumed within me." These particulars will shew how much the deists, and others, are mistaken, who think the immortality of the soul, and the retributions of a future state, were not made known to the Jews by Moses, and the Prophets: and how exclusively dependent the heathen world have been upon them for their ideas, although extremely imperfect upon these subjects. It will not do to restrict the information which was supernatural, in ancient times, to the written records of Revelation. In the Apostolical writings, there are a variety of ancient facts, mentioned or alluded to, which are not recorded in the Jewish scriptures; such as the sin, and punishment of the evil angels. 2 Pet. 2. 4. and their confinement in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day. Jude v. 6. The prophecy of Enoch, concerning the judgment, and punishment of the wicked, Jude 14. Noah's preaching righteousness to the Antediluvians. 2 Pet. 2. 5. Abraham's seeing Christ's day, and being glad, mentioned by Christ himself. John 8. 56. Lot's being vexed with the filthy discourse of the Sodomites. 2 Pet. 2. 7. The emblematic purpose for which Moses slew the Egyptian who strove with the Israelite. Acts vii. 25. The names of Pharaoh's magicians who contended with Moses. 2 Tim. 3. 8. Moses' exclamation on the Mount, when terrified by what he saw. Heb. xii. 21. The emblematical meaning of the tabernacles, and of their services explained. Heb. ix. 8—9. All which ancient facts are mentioned by the inspired writers, as things universally known and acknowledged. It is no objection to the truth of these things, that they are not recorded in the Old Testament. It is certain that all the things are not recorded which were revealed. This is certainly true in respect to Moses—for he hath omitted the revelation by which sacrifice was appointed, and yet that it was appointed of God is evident from Moses himself, who tells us that *God had respect to Abel, and his offering*. Likewise he hath omitted the discovery which was made to Abraham, of the purpose for which God ordered him to sacrifice his son. Yet that such a

discovery was made to him, we learn from Christ himself, who tells us that Abraham saw his day, and was glad. Wherefore the revelations, and facts mentioned in the New Testament may all have happened, and, though not recorded in the Old, may have been preserved by tradition. There can be no doubt but that there were revelations anciently made to mankind, which are not recorded, and that the revelations which are recorded, were accompanied with some explanations not mentioned. These were laid up in the memory of the ancients, to whom they were verbally published, who, considering them as matters of importance, rehearsed them to their children—and they, in like manner, relating them to their descendants, they were preserved by uninterrupted tradition. The persuasion which history assureth us, hath prevailed in all ages, and countries, from the most early times, concerning the placability of the Deity, the acceptableness of sacrifice, the existence of the soul after death, the resurrection of the body, the rewards, and punishments of the life to come, and other matters of a like kind, was founded on revelations concerning these things, which were made to mankind in the first age, and handed down by tradition. The truth is, these things being matters which, by the utmost efforts of their natural faculties, men could not discover the knowledge, and belief of them, which prevailed amongst all nations, whether barbarous or civilized, cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition of their being originally discovered by revelation, and spread among all nations by tradition. Wherefore in no age or country, have mankind been left entirely to the guidance of the light of nature, but have enjoyed the benefit of revelation in a greater or in a less degree. These revelations have been predicated on the covenant with mankind, in the second Adam, and explained to mankind in words, without which the object, nature, and purposes of that covenant, could not have been known to us, for whose benefit it was made. The mere knowledge of the existence of God by no means implies a knowledge of his intentions, and purposes. The resurrection of man is not a *necessary* act in God, but proceeds from his own free will—all the actions of God are perfectly free. Having *willed it*, (as James says,) he hath be-

gotten us by the word of truth, in order that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Hence the resurrection of the dead is constantly attributed by Paul to the will, and act of God, through Jesus Christ. Liberty is a necessary consequent of intelligence, and moral agency. Without liberty no being can be said to be an agent, or cause of any thing—since to act *necessarily*, is really, and properly, not to act at all, but to be acted upon.”

Section 8.

A short recapitulation of the principles established in the foregoing Sections. The effects of believing, and teaching natural religion; 1st. In destroying the divine character of the scriptures as the word of God, according to consistent, and rational apprehension of it; 2nd. The necessity arising out of the inconsistencies which it involves, of resorting to mystic divinity, immediate agencies, &c. in order that the scriptures should be believed as the word of God: and the origin of these errors.

1st. It is considered as proven, from the nature, and necessity of things, as well as from scripture, that man is naturally ignorant of the existence of God, and of all things appertaining to him *as such*. That for all those ideas, and that knowledge which are the objects, and interests of the mind's contemplation, and concern, lying beyond the limits of the present existence of time, and sense, it is dependent upon the revelations of God's spirit for, without which they could neither be thought of, known, or spoken about; and that, in the acquisition of this knowledge, language is the exclusive instrument by which, (since it was first revealed,) it is conveyed to the mind: that through this channel, those things which were formerly taught by *immediate* revelations, are communicated to all succeeding ages; and, as the medium of knowledge upon invisible relations, and spiritual things, the word of God is as necessarily the light of the world to men's minds, *and is so ordained of God*, as na-

tural light is the medium of vision to their eyes of natural objects. That language is not only the *vehicle* of this supernatural knowledge, but that the words themselves, by which it is conveyed, were of divine origin, and first revealed by the spirit of God, and that when apprehended, and received in its appropriate, and divine character, “not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, it will work effectually in those that believe.” 1 Thess. 2. 13.

2. It may be considered as proven, that the essential difference between spiritual, and natural knowledge, consists in the former being communicated to the mind by *names, and through description in words*, the archetypes of which are not naturally objects of sense, and were made known in the first instance by immediate revelations, and miraculous manifestations:—while the latter is communicated by immediate, sensible impression, or descriptions taken from them, the archetypes of which are naturally objects of sense, and may be examined by the mind through the organs of sense. It is thus that in the former method of perception, and knowledge, the mind is said to *look at things not seen*, (through the revelations of God’s spirit by description, or representation in words,) and which are eternal; while the things which are seen (as in the latter case, by natural perception,) are temporal. 2 Corinth. 4. 18.

3. That miracles were wrought to establish the divine truth of those things which were revealed, and are recorded in the scriptures to produce the same effect in the minds of men through all succeeding ages; and for that end are the means established by God. That it was, and is, by the custom of using those names, as the signs of spiritual beings, or existences, clothed with the attributes which are annexed to them by description in the word of God, that they become the objects through which the mind views the things signified, or sees things not seen; and that idol worship has proceeded from applying, in some degree, the name, and character of God, who is only known by revelation, to sensible or imaginary objects.

4. It may be considered as a further point established, that as spiritual truth, in the human mind, consists in the conformity of its ideas with the word of God, both in order, and character.

it can only be learnt *as it is*, through the plan, and in the order in which they were revealed, and are recorded, and that to alter the order, and connection in which they stand, is necessarily to change the truth, and to convert it into a falsehood, as the medium through which it can only be learnt with correctness, both as to letter, and spirit, is altered. Hence the errors arising from the arbitrary division of the scriptures, into chapters, and verses, and improper pointing: hence the errors, too, of *consequential divinity*, &c. &c.

A very remarkable illustration, and proof of the necessity of preserving the order of revelation, in which it was made, in learning the sense, and feeling the force, and authority of the communications, we find in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. In this farewell address of the leader of Israel, that people are, with great earnestness, exhorted to remember, or to take heed to themselves, lest they forget those signs, and wonders, and the commandments which were promulgated amidst the fearful displays of awful power, and majesty, exhibited on Mount Sinai. I will transcribe a portion of this chapter, for the purpose of illustrating, and establishing the sentiments formerly expressed, relative to the design of miracles in establishing the truth, and divine authority of God's words, whether they are designed to reveal existences, or beings, before unknown, or to communicate the commandments of God to man. Moses, in this part of his address to the children of Israel, proceeds as follows: "Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in, and possess the land which the Lord God of your Fathers giveth you. *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*" (These prohibitions, and injunctions are very similar to those in Revelat. 22. 18. 19.) "Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from amongst you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day. Behold I have taught you statutes, and judgments, even as the Lord my

God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whether ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them: for this is your wisdom, and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say surely this great nation is a wise, and understanding people.— For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons: *Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, gather me the people together and I will make them hear my words that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth and that they may teach their children.* And ye came near and stood under the mountain and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.” (See Exod. 19th, and 20th chapters.) “*And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words but saw no similitude only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform even ten commandments and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.* And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them, in the land whether ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (*for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,*) lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female: the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,” &c. &c. “*Take heed unto yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God,*”

&c. "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? *Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else besides him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee, and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardst his words out of the midst of the fire, &c.* Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments which I command thee this day that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee forever." The two following chapters may also be read for the same purpose, in which Moses continues to rehearse those awful manifestations of power, and majesty, displayed at the promulgation of the Law in order to the obedience of Israel. He urges the parents, in the following impressive manner, to instruct their children: "Thou shalt teach them (the commandments, statutes, and judgments) diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up—and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." The reader will observe the same method, both of revelation in words, and evidence consisting in miracles, and signs, and wonders, employed by the *teacher* who came from God (Jesus Christ) in his method of instruction, and establishing his character, and authority in the Gospel: Nicodemus said unto him, Rabbi, *we know that*

thou art a teacher come from God; *for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him*: By these he established his authority with Nicodemus as a teacher, and by his instruction, which were in the words of the spirit of God, (I will put my words in his mouth, &c. Deut. 18. 18.) he converted him to the christian faith, as appears from the subsequent history of Nicodemus, given by John.

5. It may also be considered as proven, that the truth of revelation is established by revelation itself, as the existence of the natural sun is best proven by the influence of the sun itself; it being as impossible that the ideas, and knowledge communicated by revelation, could have been of human device or invention, or that they could have existed in the human mind without revelation, as that the eye could create the natural light, or see the objects of sight without the aid of light.

6. It may be considered as proven, that the word of God sustains, in its relation to the human mind, no other than an *instrumental character*; serving only to communicate those ideas, and that knowledge upon spiritual, and invisible objects, and subjects, which it would be ignorant of without, and that it is no more to be identified with the objects of which it informs the mind, or with the spirit of God, whose word it is, than the words of a man are to be converted into his personal identity, or the light through which the eye sees visible objects, is to be considered as the objects themselves. The word of God is the medium of intelligence upon spiritual subjects; and as it is only through that word, as the stipulated signs of ideas, (stipulated by God himself,) that spiritual, and invisible things are seen, or can be learnt, so it is only through, and by the use of those signs, composed of God's word, that they can be thought about, talked of, and meditated upon.

7. It may be considered as proven, from the nature, and powers of the human mind, and the character of spiritual things as they stand distinguished from natural, and sensible ones, and the use, and end of revelation in communicating spiritual knowledge, that all the ideas, and notions which have been possessed by the pagan world, have been obtained from revelation. traditionally communicated, and that every

mode of Gentile worship was some divine institution perverted; truth never changing but for the worse, and original falsehood being a contradiction, and impossible. A practical example of these truths we have in the origin of Mahometanism, or of the *Alcoran*, which is the Mahometan Bible; the history of which stands thus, as detailed by the eloquent Maurice, the learned historian of Hindoostan. He observes that "Mahomed was himself utterly illiterate; he could neither read nor write; and that it was by the secret assistance, as has been fully proven, of two eminently learned persons, his tools in this dark business, the one named *Abdollah*, an apostate Jew, and a native of Persia, well versed in the abstruse mysteries of the *Talmud*, and the other styled, by christian writers, *Sergius*, a Nestorian monk, well acquainted with all the heresies, and divisions, at that time prevalent in the christian world. With this aid, Mahomed composed that inconsistent jargon of discordant doctrines, denominated the *Alcoran*; a work which, with shameless effrontery, he affirmed was penned by the finger of God, and brought in detached portions from the golden table, deposited from eternal ages by his throne in the highest heavens." Without the Jewish, and Christian revelations, scriptures, and traditions, neither Abdollah, and Sergius, nor any other man could have written the *Alcoran*—these furnished the materials, as far as the book contains supernatural ideas, for the composition. Of the same origin, and character, are all the systems of mythology, though, for the most part, less manifestly derived from written revelation. Mahometanism is Christianity perverted; the polytheistical systems were formed from traditional revelations before the christian era.

I now proceed to shew the effects of believing, and teaching natural religion, in preventing the belief of the scriptures as the word of God, &c. Revelation, in its primary, and proper meaning, is making something known that before was secret; and, therefore, the very end of divine revelation is, to discover to us, by a supernatural light from heaven, those truths which we are naturally ignorant of; and not the truths which we naturally know, or by the powers of the mind, and light of nature, we could discover. It is the *character* of the word of God, as *the word of God*, dwelling in

the view of the mind as supernatural, and divine, which gives it its divine authority; as it is by that character *only*, that it stands distinguished from the devices of men; but natural religion, (or the natural powers, and resources of the mind for spiritual discernment, and perception without spiritual light, (which is revelation) upon which natural religion is bottomed,) lowers the word of God to the level of human invention, and thereby, robbing it of its divine credibility, makes it rather a matter of *whim*, and *caprice*, than of *rational necessity* to believe it. Hence, it is as impossible that it can be believed as supernatural, and divine at the same time by the same mind that believes natural religion true, as it is to believe that the inventions of men are supernatural; and hence, too, when professed to be believed by natural religionists, it is not believed by its proper evidence; nor, through the right medium, apprehended in its proper character. By this inconsistent, and contradictory association of truth, and falsehood, the christian religion appears but in a very doubtful light, at times, to many who seem to be strict professors of it; how can it be otherwise? for when it is not received in its proper evidence, that it is supernatural, and divine, there cannot be a full, and strong assent of faith. Whatever may be said about the *ease* or *difficulty* of believing any tenet, or proposition true, one thing may, without the fear of contradiction, be asserted, and that is, that they can only be believed as true, by the evidence the mind has that they are so. If the proposition is divine, and supernatural, the evidence must be so too. If the proposition, or tenet, is addressed to the mind in intelligible terms, and claims a divine character in the belief of the mind, the evidence by which it would sustain this claim in the mind must be presented in intelligible terms, and of a supernatural, and divine quality: natural religion precludes the possibility of this, by clothing the mind with the capacity of discovering supernatural things by its own powers, with the use *only* of natural light, and thereby supersedes the necessity of revelation as the mean of those discoveries. This is one reason why a great portion of mankind, who are indifferent to any principles of religion, discard christianity as unsupported by the right rules of evidence, and the analo-

gies of truth; and this is the efficient cause why almost all those young men who acquire their education in schools of learning, in which natural religion forms a branch, finish their educations either sceptics, professed deists, or atheists. This is the reason why all the deistical, and natural religionist opposers of christianity, have employed so much severity against the Bible; which, in France, eventuated in atheism, and all that misrule which was marked by so much blood, and carnage. It is the cause of immorality, oppression, and licentiousness, in every quarter of Christendom; for by natural religion the light of the world, and the light of life, is stripped of its divine beams, and thereby *the light becomes darkness*, both in its intellectual, and moral effects, *as the word of God*. Natural religion excludes Jesus Christ, or divests him of his divine credentials, as *a teacher come from God*; and charges him with plagiarising from nature, in those lessons of supernatural, and divine truth which he professed to teach; it charges him, and the Apostle with palpable falsehood, when they declared that “no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; that the world by wisdom knew not God; that it is through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear; that without faith it is impossible to please God;” and that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Natural religion excludes the office, and the official character of the Holy Ghost, and denies his operations in having, by an immediate exertion of power, formed the human body of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, as he did the body of the first; in having, by virtue of the death, and resurrection of the body thus prepared, and consecrated as the great sacrifice for the sins of the world, brought life, and immortality to light, and unfolded the glories of the eternal world; and in having sent ambassadors to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in the Redeemer, and that he will raise such to celestial glory.

The effects of natural religion have not less marred the harmony, and consistency of the christian religion in the hands of its professors, than they have subverted its truth in the eyes of a discriminating world. To give a view of the origin of mystic divinity, scholastic theology, and natural religion, as they stand distinguished from the simplicity, and unadulterated truths of christianity in its primitive state, I will here take an extract from Mosheim's Church History. The corruption of the truth seems to have taken place at a period very early, subsequent to the Apostolic day. The historian observes, "that the Christian Church was scarcely formed, when, in different places, there started up certain pretended reformers, who, not satisfied with the simplicity of the religion which was taught by the Apostles, meditated changes of doctrine, and worship; and set up a new religion drawn from their own licentious imaginations. This we find from the writings of Paul; particularly where some were for forcing the doctrines of Christ into a conformity with philosophic systems which they had adopted. 1 Tim. 1. 3. 4. Titus 3. 9. Colos. 2. 8." In these quotations Paul guarded those to whom he wrote against the profane, and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called; and against giving heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than Godly edifyings: he urged them to regard the Gospel, or to do those things which are of faith. He told them to avoid foolish questions, and to beware lest any man should spoil them through vain philosophy, and deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Mosheim observes, "that the influence of those teachers was but inconsiderable at first. During the lives of the Apostles, their attempts towards the perversion of christianity were attended with but little success; they, however, acquired credit, and influence by degrees. In the third century, the christian doctors, who applied themselves to the study of letters, and philosophy, soon abandoned the frequented paths, and struck out into the dubious wilds of fancy. They looked upon it as a noble, and glorious task *to bring the doctrines of celestial wisdom into a certain subjection to the principles of their philosophy, and to make deep, and profound researches*

into the intricate, and hidden things of God. Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe. This great man, enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy, set it up as a test of all religion, and imagined that the reasons of each doctrine were to be found in that favourite philosophy; and their nature, and extent were to be determined by it. Origen's disciples exceeded him, and from their systems, the scholastic theology derives its origin. The same principles" (attend to this, reader,) "gave rise to another species of theology, which is called mystic. Its first promoters proceeded from that well known doctrine of the Platonic school, which was also adopted by Origen, and his disciples, that the divine nature was diffused through all the human soul, or that the faculty of reason was an emanation of God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the principles, and elements of all truth, human, and divine, (for the origin of this opinion see page 79 of this book.) This is the origin of innate ideas," &c. These opinions of Plato were not regularly incorporated with christianity until the fourth century, in a systematic form. Its advocates were called Platonic christians. The historian proceeds; "the disciples of this divinity" (heresy he might more properly have called it,) "having entertained a doubt that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to defend every thing contained in the sacred writings from the cavils of heretics, and infidels, so long as they were explained, literally, according to the real import of the terms, they had recourse to the fecundity of their imaginations, and maintained that the holy scriptures were to be interpreted in an allegorical manner, peculiar to the Platonic system. They accordingly alledged that the notices conveyed under the outward terms, according to their literal force, and import, was not the true meaning of the sacred writer, but that it was to be sought in a hidden, mysterious sense." This sentiment is not unlike the opinions of many in our day, (according to the mystic plan,) who say that this hidden, mysterious sense, can only be discovered by a new revelation; or an immediate physical operation of the spirit upon the mind, by which it is qualified for perceiving this latent sense; or, as others alledge, the

spirit takes the things thus *concealedly revealed*, and shews them to the mind.

By this combination of natural religion with *Platonic mystecism*, a strange chaos of divinity has been formed, from the influence of which but few, if any, of the christian creeds, since the first corruption of christianity, after the Apostolic day, have escaped; in consequence of which, religion, instead of its being intellectual, and moral in its nature, and operations, is resolved into physical agencies, and is more conversant with the imagination, and passions, than with the understanding, and the affections. The rejection of revealed religion, and the contempt in which it is held by a great portion of the intelligent orders of society in christian countries, are greatly owing to the contradictions which these systems involve. On the one hand, the natural religionist denies the necessity of revelation at all, in order to spiritual knowledge; alledging that the mind derives from nature all the ideas which revelation professes to teach: and, on the other hand, mystic divinity, uniting with natural religion, somewhat, asserts, that the scriptures are a sealed book, or a dead letter: and that, to an unregenerated mind, they are no more suited for imparting spiritual light, and knowledge, than light is qualified for producing vision to a man without eyes;—rejecting entirely the fact, that the word of God is as much the medium of mental perception, upon spiritual subjects, to our world, as the light of the sun is the medium of natural or optical vision of sensible objects; and that the word of God is itself the instrumental cause of that very regeneration; which consists in the blinded eyes (blind by nature to spiritual things,) being opened, and the creature turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. In this darkness the Gentiles walked, before the light of the glorious Gospel shown into their hearts, (through their understandings.) They were without strength, the servants of sin, and enemies in their mind by wicked works, being alienated from the life through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, &c.

By the united influence of natural religion, and mystic divinity, the scriptures are deprived of the qualities of a su-

supernatural communication—of an official proclamation of grace from the invisible world suited for, and designed to impart knowledge, of which the mind is naturally ignorant, and to disclose a destiny, and an interest which could not have been known without. By these means they no longer sustain the instrumental character of conveying light to the mind upon subjects which lie beyond the limits of time, and sense. It is by reason of these errors, and absurdities, that the christian religion, according to a current opinion in the world, has not, and ought not to have any connection with civil government: which is, in other words, saying that christianity affords no advantage in qualifying the public functionaries for the faithful discharge of their duties; not realizing that it is the great fundamental, and vital principle of honesty, and integrity in our world. This sentiment will continue until the scriptures are clothed with their proper character, until they are extricated from the darkness, and inconsistencies with which the profane, and vain babblings, and the oppositions of science, falsely so called, the vain philosophy, and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, &c. have surrounded them: and this never can be, until the question is settled, whether revealed religion is, in the ideas, and knowledge which it imparts, a plagiarism from nature; or every other religion, as far as spiritual ideas are concerned, plagiarisms from the revealed? When this is done, the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will take its proper place in society; its divine authority will be felt, and acknowledged, and its practical duties observed. When apprehended in its proper character, the great Rabbis of natural religion, like the sons of Sceva, with their companions, will willingly commit to the flames their anti-christian, and deistical books, and, like little children, submit to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for instruction; for fear will fall upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus will be magnified; so mightily will grow the word of God, and prevail. This will be a new era in the world—man will be seen rising from a state of sensuality, avarice, and ambition; from low political intrigue, false honour, and dishonesty; from war, bloodshed, and oppression; from every thing that defileth, or whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie;

from religious hypocrisy, bigotry, superstition, and intolerance, to the true sublime of man; he will appear the viceroy of his maker, his soul beaming with the irradiations of heavenly light, and all his powers directed to, and employed upon, their proper objects, his understanding convinced of its greatest good, by the best evidence, the will directed by the strongest motive, and the heart ravished by divine love, truth, and wisdom, beating responsive to the commands of his great creator, and bearing upon it the divine portrait of his gracious redeemer, drawn in celestial colours by the Holy Ghost. Then they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord; for they shall all know *him*, from the least of them even unto the greatest. Man then will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The wood, hay, and stubble, which men have built upon the foundation which is Jesus Christ, will be willingly thrown away, and the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom all that believe will be builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit, will be relyed upon—for the word of God, when perceived in its proper character, and believed in its proper evidence, as it is in truth the word of God, will effectually work in those that believe.

CHAPTER II.

An inquiry into the origin, nature, and effects of the Christian Faith.

INTRODUCTION.

It may not be amiss to detail the origin of the human race, and its progress until placed under a dispensation of grace, as introductory to our investigation of faith.

After the creator had finished making the heavens, and earth, he addressed himself, when about to enter upon the formation of man, in a way which distinguishes that part of his creation from all others. "*Let us make man* (said he) *in our own image*, (Heb. in the sketch, or shadow of us,) *after our likeness.*" These words, with respect to God, are diminutive, and denote that the most perfect endowments of human nature are but a sketch, a shadow, or something resembling the likeness of God. And yet, with respect to other creatures on earth, it speaks high distinction, and superiority. This sketch of the image of God in man must include, 1st. The noble faculties of his mind, understanding, and will, or freedom of choice for the government of all his actions, and passions, and his continual improvement in wisdom, purity, and happiness. 2. His dominion over the inferior creatures expressly mentioned; by which he is God's representative, or vice-roy, upon earth. Man must have been endowed, by *immediate* inspiration, with all the knowledge which he possessed, which consisted in not only a knowledge of the nature, and properties of the sensible objects which were presented to him, and in the knowledge of God himself, but also in the use, and meaning of language; "for the Lord God, after he had formed every beast

of the field, and every fowl of the air, brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof, and Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.” He was also made without sin, but not, according to some, in *righteousness*, and *true holiness*; which, in the nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his nature at the time he was made; because such a righteousness would have been produced in him without his knowledge or consent, which would have been to the exclusion of his intellectual, and moral powers; and so would have been no righteousness at all—for whatever is wrought in my nature without my knowledge or choice, cannot possibly be either sin or virtue in me, because it is no act of mine, and must be a mere *natural instinct*, like the industry of the bee, or the fierceness of the lion. It could not have been an *instinctive principle*, for, if it had, man could never have fallen. Righteousness is *right action*, directed by knowledge, and judgment; but Adam could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he, and all his intellectual powers, were created, and furnished with knowledge; and, therefore, he must exert, and use his intellectual powers, before he could be righteous, and holy. The most adequate ideas that I can form upon the subject are these—God created man, and, by *inspiration*, endowed him with that knowledge which was necessary for his being placed upon trial as a moral agent, having, for a test of obedience, the tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, assuring him that, in the day he eat thereof, he should surely die. During man’s innocency, God held immediate intercourse with him; he talked, and conversed with him. Man was created with appetites, and passions, for they form an essential part of his nature as man; they were no less existent before than after the fall. In this state of moral probation man fell, by attending to appetite, and the paintings of imagination, aided by the decorated allurements of Satan; intermitting his attention to, or entirely neglecting the commandment of his God, which could only have overcome the propensities to sin; he eat, and fell. A proof of the agency of passion, and its great strength, together

with the seductive influence of the imagination, are in the fact, that the dreadful penalty of the Law was not sufficiently strong to restrain them when man was in a state of sinless innocency. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” No representation of the influence of appetite, and imagination, were ever made more striking than the above sketch exhibits before the fall, and as leading to it. This false suggestion stripped the prohibition of its sanction, and clothed the fruit with new attractions. But they eat, and, by eating, they transgressed. That the likeness in which man was made to his God, in regard to his knowledge, consisted only in the capacity for *receiving* knowledge, and that what knowledge he had, was derived by immediate inspiration from God, but was entirely different, both in degree, and quality, is apparent, and self-evident, from one of the inducements which the serpent held out to him to transgress; viz. “ye shall become as Gods, *knowing* good, and evil;” and, from the sequel, as declared by God himself, “And the Lord God said, behold, the man is become as one of us, knowing good, and evil.” Transgression consisted in the obedience of the appetite, and imagination, in opposition to the commandment of God. Sensuality belonged to man’s nature, but never governed until the moment of the fall; it was then that he lost communion with his God, and became liable to the penalties of the Law. A new order of things were then introduced; instead of the favour, and protection of the government of God, which were holy, and immutable, nothing but the curse, according to justice, awaited him, being in actual rebellion against the sovereign; God withdrew his immediate communications, and, with an eye to *the seed of the woman*, (Jesus Christ) suspended the execution of wrath, or the sentence of condemnation. Here commences the mediatorial government; before rebellion, no mediator was necessary, because a state of perfect harmony, unity, and communion between the subject, and the sovereign, as long as obedience to the laws continued, were necessary consequences of that obedience. The moment the law was broken, the seed

of the woman was promised to bruise the serpent's head. In reference to that great sacrifice for sin, which should be made in the fulness of time, were all the communications of God afterwards in mercy made to our world, and, on the same account, were the penalties of the law suspended from lighting upon the transgressor, and him permitted to exist as a monument of that mercy which shown forth through the Redeemer as his propitiation. But, to be more particular in regard to man's first creation, and fall—when God made man at first, he implanted in him *natural* principles, consisting in mere human nature, such as natural appetite, and passions, which belong to the *nature of man*, in which his love to his own liberty, honour, pleasure, and gratification were exercised. These, when alone, and left to themselves, are what the scriptures sometimes call *flesh*. Had no law, restricting their indulgence, been given, no sin could have been charged upon their unrestrained gratification; and, had there been no propensity or inclination to their indulgence, it would have been entirely unmeaning to have imposed restraint. But, had there been no law, man would not have been treated as a moral creature; for where there is no law there can be no transgression. Under the government in which God placed man, which was established soon after he was created, we read of but one restraint only, and that was in the use of the tree of knowledge of good, and evil—this was the test of his obedience during the period of probation which was assigned him. We read of no other, and it is improper to indulge in speculations upon subjects where we have scripture declarations, and which are otherwise unknown but by revelation itself. Besides those principles of mere flesh, there were others given to man of a quality supernatural, and divine, wherein consisted man's spiritual resemblance to, or image of God, and in the due exercise of which, his righteousness, and true holiness consisted; these were the knowledge of God, and of his law, and that moral capacity or capability of action by rule, which were necessary to obedience, being such as immediately depended on man's union, and communion with God; which, though withdrawn, and man's nature forsaken of them, human nature would be human nature still, man's nature as

such being entire without these divine principles; which the scriptures sometimes call *spirit*, in opposition to *flesh*. These superior principles were given to possess the throne, and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart; the others to be wholly subordinate, and subservient:—and, while things continued thus, all things were in excellent order; peace, and beautiful harmony, and the highest felicity prevailed. Obedience, produced by these divine principles, were the dignity, life, righteousness, and true holiness of man. But, when man sinned; when he obeyed those principles of the inferior order which were given him not to govern, but to be subservient, and thereby broke God's law, he became exposed to the curse, and the order of the œconomy under which he was first placed were broken up—those divine principles left his heart; for, indeed, God then left him. That communion, and union with God, and that intellectual, and moral relation in which consisted man's perfection, and happiness, ceased: (God's *physical agencies*, however, continued, even in a state of rebellion, for, had he withdrawn them, man's existence must have ceased.) It was proper in itself that God should withdraw, because it would have been inconsistent with the covenant, and constitution God had established, that he should still maintain communion with man, and continue his beatific smiles upon him, after he was become a rebel, and had incurred God's wrath, and curse. We now behold man in his representative head, flying from the presence of his maker, under the fierce chastisements of a guilty conscience. That one act of rebellion has erected a law barrier against any further *immediate, personal communications* between God, and man, except, as a proper subject of the penalties of the violated law. In consequence of this act of disobedience, man's moral power ceased, and, God withdrawing from him, he was left only in possession of those principles which are sensual, and natural. This is the situation of man by nature. But God had purposes of mercy; these, however, could never be exercised so as to contradict the law of condemnation—for, in such a case, the government would have been destroyed. A law which has no penalty, or which, when transgressed, is abrogated, is, in fact, no law at all. It can neither secure pro-

tection to obedience, nor inflict punishment on transgression; it is neither a terror to evil doers, nor a praise to those that do well.

Circumstanced as man was, under a law condemnation, having been guilty of treason, the only way by which the sovereign could communicate to him in peace, or the only one which he has disclosed, was through a mediator; hence the Logos, the Word which, in process of time, was made flesh, was, in a mediatorial character, the speaker for, and to man, and it is in this way that God, in that divine relation, has preserved intercourse with our race since the fall. Those communications by revelation have not been made immediately to every individual of our race, but to particular persons who were chosen as the instruments thus divinely qualified for instructing the rest of mankind; and that holiness which, before the fall, consisted in the exercise of the natural, and divine principles with which man was endowed in their proper order, is now to be had through a quite different channel, (viz.) by faith in Jesus Christ in his full character, as prophet, priest, and king. It is only in this way that man can possess moral ability—it was entirely lost by the fall, and the substitution of Jesus Christ in his law place, in suffering the wages of sin, is the way by which it is restored.—This was an act of grace indeed. The exercise of moral ability, thus defined, pre-supposes knowledge of the true character of man as fallen, as well as knowledge of the character of Jesus Christ, and faith in him as sustaining that character. The covenant which God made with Abraham had for its foundation Jesus Christ, and looked forward to his sufferings as the sacrifice by which the law should be honoured, justice maintained, and man, the violator of the law, saved. In him mercy, and truth are met together, righteousness, and peace have kissed each other. The institution of the Mosaical law, and the sacrifices which formed so important a part of that dispensation, were a *shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*. It was a dispensation established by God in an idolatrous world, designed to preserve the knowledge of himself until the incarnation of the Word. It was, properly speaking, a theocratical government, a government

established, and administered by God himself. It was of a character precisely correspondent with the relative situations of God, and man, after the fall; with the relation of God, as a sovereign, against whom man had rebelled, by breaking a holy, and immutable law, but who had designs of mercy not incompatible with justice—with the situation of man, as a transgressor who had lost communion with God, and, with that, a knowledge of him, but who was the subject of God's compassion, and grace. Hence the profusion of blood which attended that dispensation, in offerings, and sacrifices, and hence the vital principle which had its fulfilment in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and to which all the sanguinary offerings before his advent had a reference, *“that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin—for almost all things by the law were purged with blood.* The Jewish theocracy proposed nothing to its immediate subjects which distinguished them from the Gentile world; but earthly rewards, and punishments. Their expiatory, and atoning sacrifices, were applicable to their political transgressions, and the uncleanness of the flesh. *“For the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctified to the purifying of the flesh.”* Heb. 9. 18. It was necessary that the *patterns of things in the heavens* should be purified with these; but the *heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*” Heb. 9. 23. In these sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of sins every year. Heb. 10. 3. but these were only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. Heb. 10. 1.

The language of a righteous governor to his subjects is, and must of necessity be, precisely correspondent with the moral relation they bear to him; if they are obedient to his communications, they are in the language of complacency, and approbation; if disobedient, in denunciations of wrath, and the infliction of the penalties of the broken law. Exclude the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ, (to which the sacrifices, &c. under the Mosaic law had reference,) or his taking upon himself the wages of sin, in the place of man, and a most glaring absurdity is involved; the demands of God's Law, which are holy, and just, are abrogated, in order to

make way for the introduction of its violaters into heaven; and thus the government is virtually broken up. Under the gospel dispensation, grace does not consist, exclusively, in the literal remission of sin; but, in its pardon through the merits, and for the sake of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our surety; these are the meritorious causes of pardon, and the immediately procuring one, where the gospel is heard, is faith in him. But revelation has not merely the object of salvation beyond the grave in view, but it is designed for, and actually produces that effect upon the believer, of exalting, and improving his nature in this world, and thereby prepares him for a future happy existence. It exalts him here, by teaching him his divine origin, and high destiny; it discovers to man his true dignity, and pours contempt upon all earthly objects, by unfolding prospects of a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory than any temporal concerns can possibly promise, or the precarious, and fleeting state of human life can permit him to hope for. By revelation it is manifest that we are in a state of probation, and discipline, preparatory to our entering on another state of being. This, and every other information of a like character, we derive from the word of God—his providences are only conducive to spiritual edification, and moral obedience, as they are explained by his word, and applied to those purposes through that explanation by the mind of man, and which it is enabled to do in a practical manner, by those very chastisements, and providences of God thus explained. That man is in a state of grace, or favour, is manifest from the fact of his existence—for what prevented his utter ruin, as the consequence of transgression, but the interposition of mercy? This is further proven, and also that we are in a state of trial, from the *revealed* certainty of a future judgment. If we are not in a state of moral probation, why are we assured that for every thought, and word, and deed, we shall be judged? It is thought by many, that the blessings which God pronounced on Adam just after his creation, were, by the fall, converted into a curse, under which all his sons, and daughters since have come into the world; but we find the very same blessings with which God blessed Adam before his rebellion, pronounced after the pro-

mise of Jesus Christ upon Noah, and his sons, in the 9th chapter of Genesis, in the very language, and words of the Adamic blessing. This further proves that man, since the fall, as he was certainly before, is in a state of probation. In the times of ignorance, and idolatry, before the advent of the son of righteousness, God winked at, but since that time, he commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath offered faith unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Section 1.

The nature, and causes of Faith, considered.

THE Deity never has mistaken his designs, nor misconceived the means which were necessary for the ends he proposed; he has done nothing in vain, nor any thing unnecessarily. To the *Christian Philosopher*, the perfect fitness that exists in the œconomy of nature between its different parts in the chain of causation for regular results, has ever formed an occasion for just wonder, and admiration; and has correspondently reflected honour, and glory, and wisdom, upon the great creator. The work of redemption exhibits a still more glorious manifestation of the perfections of Jehovah than that of creation. The light of life, and immortality, by its superior effulgence, casts a deep shade around the most luminous displays in nature. The bond of union which connects a worm of the dust to the throne of God, and redeems him from a state of sin, and death, to a state of purity, and immortality is one of the most glorious works of the Almighty. Into this stupendous plan of wisdom, and mercy the angels of heaven have desired to penetrate: “*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”

I now proceed to investigate the means by which this belief in the Son of God is produced; and here let me premise, that they are *the very same* which were employed by Christ, and the Apostles—of the same divine character, consisting in the same supernatural matters of fact, explained by the same words, and exhibited to the mind in the same intelligible terms. This faith differs from every other description of belief, as much as the objects, and the evidence (which are divine and supernatural) differ from natural ones; and the mind possessed of this faith, differs as much in its ideas, and knowledge; in its prospects, and enjoyments, from one which is only informed upon temporal concerns as the ravishing glories of heaven, and the sure prospect of their enjoyment differ from the low, and sordid pursuits of earthly, and perishable objects. The mind possessed of the faith of the Gospel, is the same mind, identified by the same faculties, and powers, which it was before it believed. Faith is the evidence, or full assurance of things not seen—it is the belief of divine, and supernatural propositions by divine, and supernatural proof—it embraces things of this character which have past, are present, and are to come. The objects of this faith are exclusively those which have been revealed by a supernatural light from heaven, without which they could not have been known; and the proof by which their truth is established is of the same origin, and character; and without which they could not be believed. I will give some examples of the different objects which faith embraces, of those things which have been, of those which now are, and of those which are to come.—By faith we understand that the worlds were framed, or produced by the word, or *command* of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear; God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son to redeem the world, &c. The present views of faith are such as the following:—Jesus Christ, the divine Saviour, in our nature glorified, is exalted by the right hand of God a Prince, and a Saviour to grant repentance, and remission of sins—that the government is on his shoulders, and that the present heavens, and earth, by the same Word who created them, are kept in store, or treasured up, being reserved for

fire against the day of judgment, and destruction of ungodly men. The future views of faith are, the day of judgment, the happy immortality which will then be conferred on the righteous, and the destruction that will cover ungodly men, &c.

Hope is the *consequence* of the gracious situation of the creature to whom by the revelation's of God, good things are promised, and which are as necessarily seen by faith, as it is by faith we know that the worlds were made, that angels fell, that Immanuel died, &c. Were it only revealed to man that the blackness of darkness is reserved for him forever, being kept for fire against a day of destruction, it would be by faith that this dreadful end is seen; and as such a revelation contains no *promise of good things*, there could be no hope; consequently this faith (which embraces no proposition of grace, as the terms in which it was made contain none,) would be the faith of despair—it would be the faith of a devil—man would believe, and tremble. Faith is the *evidence* or confidence of things not seen. The word in the Greek, which stands for *evidence*, denotes a *strict proof* or *demonstration*, a proof which thoroughly convinces the understanding, and determines the will. The Apostle's meaning is, that faith answers all the purposes of a demonstration, because, being founded on the veracity, and power of God, these perfections are complete evidence of the things which God declares have happened, or are to happen, however much they may be out of the ordinary course of nature, or contrary to it. I have observed that faith is the belief of supernatural or spiritual things, (which things themselves are revealed) by supernatural or divine testimony. Our Saviour said that he would not "receive the testimony of John, than whom a greater prophet had not been born of a woman; although John bear witness of the truth: there is another (that is, the Holy Ghost,) that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to furnish the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. The Father himself which hath sent me hath borne witness of me."

The nature, and character of the means of faith are implied in the above exposition, and definition of faith itself. The proposition believed is supernatural, and so is the evidence by which it is believed. Constructed, and circumstanced as the human mind is, it cannot believe any thing true but by evidence—it must have either the evidence of the senses, or the testimony of those who had sensible proof; and, in my opinion, any person who professes to believe the christian religion true upon any other principle, must often doubt its truth, and justly too. The truth of what Christ taught depends upon the divinity of his and its character, and the belief of that depends upon divine testimony. His language is, if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin. John, after having given a full history of the signs, and wonders which he wrought, tantamount to the exertion of the original creative power; consisting in the manifestations of ineffable glory, wisdom, and majesty; voices, at different times, coming from heaven, proclaiming Jesus to be the Son of God; his healing the sick; giving eyes to the blind, and, in all things fulfilling, in the most minute manner, the ancient prophecies concerning him; predicting future events, and their literal fulfilment; and especially in his death, and resurrection, none of which could have been done but by the Holy Ghost; I say, after describing all these things, John observes, “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that *ye might* believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.” Paul says that Christ Jesus our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. He observes, in another place, (Acts 17. 30.) that, in the days of idolatrous ignorance, God winked at, but now (since the advent of the sun of righteousness, the light of life,) commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he *hath given assurance unto all men, or offered faith*, in that he hath raised him

from the dead. After the Saviour arose, and indeed before his death, he most solemnly elected the disciples to bear witness of him; promising also the Holy Ghost to testify with them, that he was the Saviour of the world; assuring them that the Holy Ghost should bring all the things to their remembrance whatsoever he had told them, and teach them things to come, that he should take the things of Christ, and shew them unto them. Accordingly, in the first chapter of Acts, we find the inspired historian taking up the narrative from the time that Jesus Christ was taken up; and whom he says, after that, *through the Holy Ghost* had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen, to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; telling them not to depart from Jerusalem until they should receive power from on high, which should be after that the Holy Ghost is come upon them. "He said, ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld him, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Some days after, the Holy Ghost was poured out, as it had been promised in the prophecies of Joel, consisting in a noise like a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house where the one hundred, and twenty disciples were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance, by which the devout Jews, who were from every nation under heaven, were amazed, and in doubt, but Peter got up, and testified also, and told them that Jesus, God had raised up, whereof *we are all witnesses*; therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy

Ghost, he hath sent forth *this which ye now see, and hear*: assuring them, by this testimony, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord, and Christ. On hearing this, they were pricked to their heart, and asked what they should do? Peter, unto whom was committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, now *opens the door of faith* unto the Jews, (Acts 14. 27.) and tells them to repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and those who were afar off. By all these facts—these signs, and wonders, which had been predicted, and the words of the Apostles, explanatory of them, the gifts of the Holy Ghost which were received by those who believed in Jesus Christ, which was according to his promise, “and those signs shall follow them that believe, &c.” were the character, and authority of Jesus Christ ascertained, and established, and the truth of all that he said confirmed, both of what was past, is present, and future; and it is by the evidence of these things *written*, (for they are not to be acted over,) that we are to believe, as John says, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and, believing, have life in his name.

The faith of the Gospel is of the operations of God, but not in the way generally believed in our day, or in the way which seems to have been supposed for many centuries past. The operations which are contended for as pre-requisite to faith in this day, are unauthorised by Christ, and the Apostles, and have no place in the Gospel plan. The operations of the Spirit, which produced faith in the Apostolic day, were addressed to the external senses, and the mind through them, and explained by words—they were supernatural, and miraculous.

The spiritual gifts were *never promised to*, neither were they ever bestowed upon, or received by, any description of persons after Christ's ascension, except believers; who were made so, not by the internal, secret operations, but such as I before expressed of an external, supernatural, and miraculous kind. These, except on the day of Pentecost, were wrought, at the instance of the Apostles, in the name of Jesus Christ, consisting in healing the sick, raising the

dead, &c. and explained by them in words in proof of their divine commission to preach the Gospel, and to establish the fact, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and Redeemer of men; being exalted by the right hand of God, a prince, and a Saviour; and that the efficacy of this salvation was to be derived by faith in him. In correspondence with Christ's promise, as soon as a person believed by the supernatural testimony of the spirit, the gifts of the spirit were bestowed upon them, in confirmation of the divine truth of the propositions believed. *And these things are written that we may believe, and are the means so ordained of God.* This will be my object hereafter to prove.

I must here entreat the christian reader to attend with care to the facts upon which I rely for the support, and establishment of what I have alledged. The proof which I shall adduce is divine, and supernatural, because it will be taken from the declarations, and promises of the Saviour himself, and their literal fulfilment after his ascension.

The present investigation cannot be uninteresting to those who have rejected christianity upon the account of a want of evidence, or from having been told that antecedent operations are necessary. I claim the belief of those propositions which compose the christian religion by the authority of evidence, of divine, supernatural evidence alone, addressed to the mind in intelligible terms.

I have said that the mind is formed with a *capacity* for acquiring supernatural, and spiritual knowledge, but that, in order to such an acquirement, nothing short of supernatural, and divine revelation can do. This, I must needs think, has been abundantly proven in the Sections of the preceding Chapter.

I now proceed to prove that faith, in the Apostolic day, was produced in the way before asserted, (viz.) by external manifestations in signs, and wonders, and words explanatory; and that the operations of the Spirit, contended for in our day, formed no part of the Gospel plan; and that the operations of the Spirit upon individuals in the form of gifts, and graces, were always *subsequent* to belief. Those who distinguish the operations of the Spirit, in the Apostolic day, from those which are supposed to exist in our day in a se-

cret, insensible form, by which regeneration, and faith are produced, call the former *miraculous*, and the latter *special* operations. Against this distinction I must here enter my protest, and not only deny the distinction as being untrue in fact, but assert (as it will be one of my objects to prove,) that every instance of true, genuine, christian faith, has been produced by the *same means* which were employed in the Apostolic day, (that is, by miracles themselves, and precisely those which are recorded in the Bible,) since their ministrations closed. I again repeat it, that every instance of true christian faith, since the Apostolic day, has been produced by the very means which were employed in their day, of which we have the record; and that faith in Jesus Christ never was, never has been, nor will it ever be, by any other than supernatural, and miraculous means; the reason is, that the proposition "*that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the World,*" is supernatural. The evidence, as well as the principles of truth which are supported by it since miracles ceased, and the cannon of scripture closed, are of record; they are, however, as supernatural when in writing, as they were when exhibited in real action, and declared by the immediate inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The divine, and supernatural character of revealed truth, and the evidence by which it supports itself, are just as well preserved, and as demonstrable, and as well suited for divine, and supernatural instruction, though of record, as in the days of miracles. It was by words that miracles were, at any period of the church, applicable to the establishment of divine truth—this arises out of the very nature, and necessity of the human mind. Without words to explain, and apply miracles to the divine purposes for which they were wrought, they could excite no other mental feeling than that of amazement. In the record, the miracles, the supernatural matters of fact are detailed, as are the words which were dictated by the Holy Ghost, who alone knows the things of God, and the designs, and purposes for which they were wrought, by which their divine intention is explained, and applied to the establishment of heavenly truth. These words, in the days of miracles, were the instruments of divine knowledge; by them supernatural ideas were communicated to men's

minds, and sensible miraculous manifestations were made to the senses in order to establish them, or to arrest attention, and render the mind accessible to them. These words are the signs of the same ideas, they were near two thousand years ago, and sustain precisely the same divine character they then did; and the miracles are recorded for the same purpose for which they were first wrought. The word of God, when apprehended as the word of God, by its evidence, as effectually works now in those that believe it as such, as it did in the Thessalonian Church. 1 Thess. 2. 13. In order to this belief, the reader will readily discern the necessity of preserving the word of God, as necessarily, and intrinsically supernatural, and divine; and of excluding entirely the idea of natural religion, which I have endeavoured to shew in the preceding Chapter, is an act of logical necessity—and also of silencing every other voice under heaven in the communication of *original ideas* upon spiritual subjects, or things not seen, but the voice of God. I will now proceed to the illustration, and proof of what I have stated. I design to stick close to the record, and to admit nothing in the investigation but what is supported by a "*thus it is written.*"

Our blessed Lord, before his crucifixion, and after his resurrection, before his ascension, made many promises to his disciples relative to his sending the Spirit, the promise of his Father. He also delineated to them the effects which the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, should produce, and the character of his operations, and the purposes they should answer—that he would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they had not believed in him, &c." He told the disciples that he had many things to say unto them, but by reason that they could not then bear them, he deferred them until the spirit of truth should come, whom, he told them, will guide you unto all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you. John 16. In another place, as recorded by the same historian, he addresseth his disciples (the twelve who had been with him from the beginning,) in the following man-

ner—"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.—And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it. If ye love me keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, &c. The comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14. These were promises made to the twelve disciples. In the close of the 15th chapter of John, when addressing his twelve disciples, he tells them, "But when the comforter (or monitor) is come whom I will send unto you from my Father; even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." In the seventeenth chapter of the same history which details Christ's prayer to his Father to glorify him, and preserve his disciples in unity, and in truth, he observes, "Neither pray I for these alone, (the twelve) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may be one," &c. In the 16th chapter of Mark, we find the following account: "And he said unto them, (the twelve) go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." In correspondence with these promises, Mark concludes his history, which was written thirty odd years after Christ's

ascension, and after the Gospel had been preached every where, in the following words: "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God; and they (the twelve) went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and *confirming the word with signs following.*" The latter part of Mark's history, in which he details the promises of Christ in respect to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the various promises of the same character which are enumerated by John, are correspondent with the concluding part of Matthew's history:—"And Jesus came, and spake unto them, (the eleven disciples, who went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, taken from verse 16,) saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth—go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: *and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" Mark says, "And they went forth, and preached *every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following;*" by which he has explained the sense in which the expression in Matthew, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, made to the eleven disciples, was used, and intended. Luke informs us that after Jesus Christ had risen, he appeared unto his disciples, and said unto them, "these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that *repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem—And ye are the witnesses of these things—And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.*"

I will proceed, in the next Section, to shew the manner in which the above promises were fulfilled, by which a former

observation will be established: (viz.) that the spiritual gifts never were bestowed upon, nor received by any description of persons, after Christ's ascension, except believers, who were made so, not by the secret, internal operations, but by those of an external, miraculous kind, addressed to the mind through the external senses, and explained in words, and by them applied to Jesus Christ as proof that he is the Son of God, and sustains a mediatorial character between God, and man, in his administrations. I will afterwards prove that it is by the record of these facts, and communications to the mind by hearing, and explanations in words, we learn, and believe the same things—that this is the established plan of God, and that preaching the Gospel, and discipling the world to christianity, consist in nothing but teaching the things thus recorded, and believing them by the evidence in the record. And, lastly, that they derive their practical operations upon the human mind, and conduct from the great personal motives, and interests they ascertain which consist in, and proceed from, the *insensible* relations it sustains to insensible existences, which were necessarily unknown but for the Gospel revelations; and from the co-operations of God's providences, his chastisements, &c. which are only conducive to these purposes, as they are explained by God's word, as being a part of the divine, and gracious administrations over this fallen province of his government.

Section 2.

The promises of Christ to his Disciples, relative to the gifts, and operations of the Spirit, literally fulfilled, and the manner of it—from whence is to be collected the true doctrine, and principles of spiritual operations, and the intention of them.

Without knowledge intelligent beings cannot act morally. Without spiritual, and divine knowledge, the moral character of men's conduct would, of necessity, be restricted to natural, and earthly principles. The intention of the Gospel, in the hands of its first teachers, was, intellectually, to inform

mankind upon spiritual, and divine subjects; and, morally, to reform them by the practical authority of their divine instruction. But, in order to these purposes, the means were to be adapted to the faculties, and capacities of men—their senses were to be addressed, &c.

The reader will excuse the repetitions of which I am chargeable in the last Section, and, in some degree, in this. The subject requires the most minute attention, both as to the promises of the Spirit, and the precise manner of their fulfilment, in order to discover the wide, and essential difference between the notions of spiritual operations in our day, and those in the Apostolic time; and the difference between the promises, and our ideas of their fulfilment.

Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, which contains a faithful and literal history of the fulfilment of the promises made to the disciples, recapitulates what he had written before in his gospel relative to the promises in the first chapter. He observes, that “Christ commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence, &c. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1. 4, 7—8.

According to Christ’s commandment, they were all together (above one hundred, and twenty, taken from 1st chapter, 15th verse,) when the day of Pentecost was fully come: Acts 2. and, agreeably to what he told them, relative to the promise of his Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost, “suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Who were these who received the Spirit, and spake, by his influence, with other tongues? I answer, that they were the one hundred, and twenty disciples, who were, with one accord, in one place. These

gifts were correspondent with the promise, "these signs shall follow them that believe; they shall speak with new tongues," &c.: for the world (the unbelievers) *could not receive him*. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men," (according to the Jewish idea of devoutness, I suppose,) "out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad," (viz. the one hundred, and twenty disciples, speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance,) "the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language; and they were all *amazed*, and *marvelled*; saying one to another, behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? (who were illiterate men) And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, Meds, &c. &c.; we do hear them speak in our own tongues, the wonderful works of God. And they were all *amazed*, and were in *doubt*, saying one to another, *what meaneth this?* Others, mocking, said, these men are full of new wine." I ask the reader, whether, in this period of the operations, any of the *secret* operations were employed, or whether it is fair to infer any other than what are detailed? If it is, it is manifest they are not of record, and cannot claim divine authority. I proceed with the history. —The spirit was to testify by his out-pourings, &c. and the gifts of tongues in them that believed: this we have literally fulfilled. But the Apostles were also to bear witness, for they "had been with Christ from the beginning." John 15. 26. 27.; accordingly, Peter, (Acts 2. 14.) standing up (to whom was committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and who opened the door of faith to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles on their day of Pentecost, when Cornelius, and friends received the Spirit,) with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, "ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, *and hearken to my words*," (by words this miraculous affair is to be explained, and applied to Jesus Christ to prove his character, &c.) "these are not drunken as you suppose, &c. but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons

and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, (none could be called such but those that believed) I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy," &c.; precisely agreeable to Christ's promise, "and these signs shall follow them that believe, they shall speak in new tongues, &c."— "Ye men of Israel," (said Peter) "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him" (for Jesus said, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, believe for the works' sake,) "in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him being delivered by the determinate council and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up; having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Peter then goes on with David's prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, his resurrection, &c. He then observes, "This Jesus hath God raised up, *whereof we are all witnesses.* Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and *having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now SEE and HEAR.* For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, "The Lord saith unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make my foes my foot-stool." Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ. Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men, and Brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And with many other words did he testify, and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation."

I must call the reader's attention to the observation which I several times before made, and for the establishment of

the truth of which, the above minute history of the operations of the Spirit is adduced: (viz.) that the operations of the Spirit were not secret, immediate, and internal in the Apostolic day, but consisted in miracles, and signs, and wonders, addressed to the senses, to the eye, and ear, and words explanatory of them, by which they were applied to Jesus Christ as a proof of his death, resurrection, ascension, and character as a mediator, &c. &c. I now ask my unprejudiced reader, according to this exposition of the operations of the Spirit, and the fulfilment of the promises which Christ made to his disciples, to examine minutely the above narrative, and, with fairness, to say what produced the exclamation of the Jews, "Men and Brethren what shall we do?" The Spirit was to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16. 8. 12. He was to testify of Christ, and the disciples were to bear witness, because they had been with him from the beginning." John 15. 26. 27. And *after* any persons believed they were to receive the Spirit. Mark 16. 17. 18: but whom the world (or the unbelievers) could not receive. John 14. 17. With many other words Peter testified; but how could Peter know that all the miracles, and signs, and wonders, which the Jews, from every nation under heaven, saw, and heard, consisting in the one hundred and twenty disciples, poor, ignorant Galileans, speaking in all the variety of languages in which the Jews were born, (and of which the Galileans were before ignorant,) the wonderful works of God; I ask how Peter knew any more than the Jews, who were amazed at what they saw, and heard, (and who did not receive any intelligible ideas upon the subject until Peter testified by words, and explained the things thus exhibited to the external senses,) that Jesus being exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, had shed forth that which they saw, and heard? How did he know that these things were connected with the glorious exaltation of Jesus Christ? His celestial, and invisible throne, was as insensible to Peter's natural eyes as to the senses of the Jews, who knew nothing about it. In John, 14. 16. 17. Christ told his disciples that he would pray the Father, and he shall (said he) give you another

Comforter, or Monitor, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth—ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. He also told them that the Spirit should take the things of Christ, and shew them unto them, and glorify him—that the Spirit should testify of him, and the Apostles also bear witness; and in a particular manner the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed to Peter, who was to open the gospel plan, and the reign of grace, and discover to the world the glorious Redeemer in his mediatorial throne. Accordingly Peter received the Holy Ghost, Acts 2. 4. by which he was enabled to do this; on account of which, together with the previous teaching of Christ, he was distinguished in supernatural knowledge from the amazed Jews—for no man knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God, which things he revealed in his own words that they might be known. 1 Corinth. 2. 12. 13.

We have in the above minute detail of the operations of the Spirit, by which is explained practically, Christ's promises to his disciples as to the mode of his operations, a lively, and realizing view of what it is to explain spiritual things in spiritual words, in the translation of Macknight of the 13th v. of the 2d chapt. 2. Corinth. We also collect from them the proper idea of spiritual perception, and knowledge, as distinguished from natural perception; which consists in seeing things by the eye of the mind through description in words by revelation, which are not visible to the natural eye. The miracles were visible to the natural senses—they were seen and heard; but they communicated no distinct knowledge to the mind; they only excited *wonder* and *amazement*; this is what they were designed for, and was a necessary consequence of their supernatural character; it was by words, by the words of the Spirit who only knew the things of God, and the purpose for which the signs and wonders were manifested, that they could be explained, and applied so as to impart knowledge, and faith. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Accordingly Peter, speaking by the Holy Ghost, and the knowledge he had derived from him through the Saviour, (for Peter, as a mere man, destitute of the instruction which

he had received from the Saviour, during the three years of his ministrations, and teaching; and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; was as ignorant of that which he saw, and heard as the amazed Jews were) Peter, speaking by this divinely derived knowledge, explained all that were seen, and heard, as being the fulfilment of the prophecies of Joel, and David, concerning the character of king Jesus, and as explicitly applicable to him in his mediatorial relation to our world. By these signs, and wonders, and their explanations, the Jews were pricked to their heart to find that they had crucified, and slain the Lord with wicked hands, whom God had raised up, and made both Lord, and Christ; and on account of the gracious circumstance that whosoever should call on his name should be saved, of which Peter informed them, they made the inquiry at the Apostles, "Men, and Brethren what shall we do?" God having exalted Jesus Christ, after his expiatory sacrifice, with his right hand to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, (Acts 5. 31.) having been made a curse for them; and, although possessed of sinless purity, suffered the penalties of the law, that he might redeem those who were under its condemnation; and having thereby removed the Law barrier which transgression had erected, authorised Peter to urge them to repent, and be baptized every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and thereupon promised them the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These were the words of reconciliation which were committed to the Apostles by which they, in Christ's stead, exhorted the people to be reconciled to God. As the principle (or the evidence of it) which I am endeavouring to establish is matter of record, upon which I exclusively rely, I must invite the reader's particular attention to the above account of the first out-pourings, and operations of the Spirit to establish it. I have often repeated it in the present, and previous chapter, that faith never has been produced since the ascension of the Saviour but by signs, and wonders addressed to the senses, and words explanatory of them. To do the above case justice we will, in imagination, abstract from the scene exhibited, the miraculous display which the Jews saw, and

heard, and which amazed, and confounded them. By this we have nothing left, which is addressed to the mind through the senses; nor is there any fulfilment of the prophecies of Joel, and David, concerning the out-pourings of the Spirit; for if that which were seen, and heard, were the fulfilment of the prophecies, nothing else could have been; no other operations of the Spirit were intended by the Holy Ghost, in his revelations through the prophets, than what were seen, and heard, and explained by Peter. Had Peter have gotten up, and told the Jews that that which they saw, and heard was an out-pouring of the Spirit, without the miraculous displays, they would have justly charged him with derangement or distraction; as they could not have seen or heard any thing but what was natural. Exclude Peter's words, explanatory of what the Jews really did see, and hear, and by which they were applied to Jesus Christ; and the Jews could not have felt any other mental operation than wonder, and amazement, as they did before the explanation. Exclude both the signs, and wonders, and the words of Peter, explaining them; and the mind cannot suppose any more spiritual operations, nor ideas of them, than at any other time, and place. And, suppose no record or tradition had been preserved of the manifestations, and explanations on the day of Pentecost, I ask whether the human mind, in Lexington, would not be as necessarily ignorant of them, and the principles which they established, as a person born blind would be of colours, without ever having heard of them?

The explanations given of the promises, and prophecies, relative to the out-pourings of the Spirit, by their explicit, and actual fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, which are correspondent with every other case, in nature, and character; ought to settle the correct doctrine upon the subject of the operations. Never was a case tried in a court of justice, in which the truths were better established, according to the right rules of evidence, than the divine, and supernatural propositions that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and is exalted a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance, and remission of sins, &c. &c. by supernatural, and divine evidence on the day of Pentecost, and innumerable other occasions. But the establishment of this truth stands in connection with many others; such as the univer-

gal condemnation of mankind by reason of transgression; the certainty of the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment, of which the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a pledge; the source of the sickness, pain, and sorrow of body, and mind, and of death itself, which are (vix incidental to humanity, being in sin, or the wages of it, &c. &c. all these things stand in connection with the proofs which establish the divine, and glorious character of the Redeemer, as they are only intelligible through the explanations of his divine teachings. The conviction of sin, and conversion to God, on the day of Pentecost, in the manner before explained, of about three thousand, shews the meaning of the saying of Christ, when he said that the Spirit, when he is come, should reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, &c., and also of David, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool. It is through the Gospel that he continues to reconcile the world to him; which takes its efficiency from the death of Jesus Christ. It is said that those who gladly received the word were baptized, and continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, and fellowship: And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders, and signs were done by the Apostles. (v. 41. 43.)

It is often asserted, by way of distinction, that the operations to which I have been attending were miraculous, and that the operations contended for, believed in, and taught in our day, are *secret, special ones*, not of the miraculous kind. I ask from whence this distinction, and at what period of the dispensation of grace the operations changed; and, if changed, why take texts, and urge the reading of the Gospel, which contains an account of none other than miraculous ones? Is it not through the revelations made by the Holy Ghost, by signs, and wonders, and words explaining them as they are written, that we hear, and learn the truth as it is in Christ Jesus? This distinction, and these opinions, arise from an entirely erroneous apprehension of the nature, and character of the Gospel. It never was known but by miraculous, and supernatural instruction, or revelation, nor was it ever believed, nor will it ever be believed, but by means of the same description, and character of evidence. The

same signs, and wonders, and divine words, spoken by Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, explaining them, by which divine instruction, and faith, were produced in the Apostolic day, operate the same effects in our day, wherever correct ideas, and belief are formed. It is true they are in writing; but the miracles wrought by the Spirit, and the words of divine inspiration, are just as *verily* divine when of record, as when exhibited to the confounded, and amazed multitude of the Jews. The words that Peter spoke by the Holy Ghost, are as essentially divine, and supernatural, when written in the Acts of the Apostles, as they were when he lifted up his voice to the people; and they are not more destitute of a superhuman character than they then were—it is by apprehending them in this manner, as the word of God, that they become effectual. The ideas of a resurrection from the dead; of a future judgment; a heaven, and a hell; and the means of escaping everlasting burning; and a knowledge of the fact, that we are every moment sustained by the mercy, and power of God, who is ever present with us, and is waiting to be gracious, are exclusively from the revelations of the Gospel; and the same Spirit which was in Christ, who spake through the Prophets. Preaching the Gospel consists in teaching these things as they were taught by the Holy Ghost, and proving them by the proofs he employed; the teacher availing himself of all the sorrows, the brevity, the uncertainty, (for God has not revealed to us when we shall die,) and calamities of life, which men feel, and the certainty of death, &c. in giving them a practical influence. These are the means which the invisible, and otherwise unknown God, than as he has manifested himself through revelation, has ordained, and established, for the purpose of obedience to him by faith in Jesus Christ. No denomination of preachers, whom I ever heard, who either preached sense, or were profitable to the public, preached in any other way; and their want of success has been ever precisely correspondent to their departure from this plan. This is the only kind of instruction that is suited to the mind; formed as God has made it; it was that which was employed by Christ, and the Apostles.

Agreeable to this order, Paul observes, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1st. chap. 13th verse, “In whom (that is, Christ) ye (Gentiles) also trusted *after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;—* who was received, as Peter said above, *after* repentance. This is the same Spirit, and received in the same way, who Paul, in the same *Epistle* 4th chap. and 30th verse, guards the Ephesians not to grieve—Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, said he, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption. It was in the name of Jesus that all the miracles were wrought, and the gifts of the Spirit conferred by the Apostles upon those on whom they laid their hands—the gifts, and operations of the same Spirit by whose power the man Christ Jesus was raised from the dead, and which were exercised, and conferred by the Apostles (in the name of Jesus Christ) to prove that very fact, and the resurrection from the dead, and to establish the authority of the Gospel as being divine. Agreeably to this idea Paul, in the 1st chapter of the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 19th and 20th verses, expresses great anxiety that they should, by the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation, know what is the riches of his, (Christ’s) inheritance in the saints; and what is the *exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.* The faith which was produced by these miracles, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, was the *faith of the operation of God* (Collos. 2. 12.) who hath raised him (Christ) from the dead; and it was by these very operations, viz. the raising of Christ from the dead, and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, that the faith thus spoken of was produced. The proposition believed, (viz.) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was divine, and the evidence by which it was believed was also divine, viz. his resurrection from the dead, and the miracles, signs and wonders wrought in the name of Jesus Christ. These attestations of the divinity, and character of Jesus Christ, God never would have made, were he any other than the very person, and character he professed to be. Paul says that tongues

are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying or teaching serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 1 Corinth. 14. 22.—The tongues which were spoken in the second chapter of Acts, were not for the one hundred and twenty disciples who believed, but for the Jews who were assembled at Jerusalem from every nation under heaven; and, as a *sign*, they amazed, and confounded the Jews, and when they were thus astonished, Peter began to prophesy or to teach them, &c. John, in a passage formerly quoted, says, these signs which Jesus did are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and believing that ye might have life through his name. Are they not written, also that *WE may believe*, and, for that purpose, do they not stand as evidence?

We will now pass on to the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In the third chapter of the Acts, we are informed that Peter, and John said unto a man who had been lame from his birth, (forty years) "*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk, and he (Peter) took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength, and he leaping up, stood, and walked, and went into the temple praising God; and all the people saw him walking, and praising God, and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder, and amazement at that which had happened unto him; and all the men ran together unto the porch of Solomon greatly wondering; and when Peter saw it he answered unto the people,*" (for the Spirit had borne witness by the miracles, and now the disciples are to testify by the explanation which they are enabled to give by inspiration) "*Ye men of Israel why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go; but ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and killed the Prince of Life whom God hath raised from the dead where-*

of we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see, and know; yea the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now brethren I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which *God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.* For Moses truly, said unto the Fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you," &c. By this miracle and preaching, or rather by the Spirit testifying of Jesus by the Apostles working the miracle through faith in his name, and the witness which the Apostles bore to the divinity, resurrection, &c. of Jesus Christ, were five thousand persons converted to the Faith of the Gospel. I will here repeat the former request, of the candid reader, to say, from the narrative given, whether any other operations or influences were exercised upon or in the minds of the hearers, than by *seeing*, and *hearing*, and their attention to the objects thus presented, and the ideas thus produced by *explanation in words*? Seeing the miracle, of a man made whole, who had been lame from his birth, forty years, by virtue of Peter saying to him, "*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk*"—And hearing Peter explain this matter; and denying that it was by their (his, and John's) power or holiness that the man was made to walk; but that God, having glorified his Son Jesus, whom they (the Jews) had slain, him had God raised from the dead, of which they (the disciples) were all witnesses; and that his name, through faith in his name had made the man strong, whom said Peter ye *see* and *know*: yea the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in *the presence of you all*—Peter then (by the demon-

strations of the Spirit here exhibited, which were to reprove the world of sin, because it had not believed in Jesus Christ, of righteousness because he had risen, and gone to his Father, (and as a proof of it sent the Holy Ghost as he promised), and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged) urged them to repent, and be converted; assuring them that Jesus was received up into heaven until the times of the restitution of all things; telling them that unto you (Jews) first, God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquity; and repeating what Moses had said concerning the prophet whom God should raise up from among them; and pressing upon them the condemnation which they were to lie under, if they did not hear him. I say that it was by the miracle, and words explanatory of it as being produced by the Holy Ghost whom Jesus Christ had sent from heaven, being the promise of the Father, and which proved his resurrection, and government in heaven, that the five thousand believed, and not by the secret internal operations as believed by some; they formed no part of the Apostolic plan of faith; if they were ever employed, it was *after* faith. In the 4th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it is said, many of them which *heard* the word *believed*; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Section 3.

The same subject continued; with additional proofs, and illustrations derived from matters of fact, that the operations of the Spirit never were employed since the ascension of Jesus Christ but in miracles, in signs, and wonders, and words explanatory in producing faith; which were always addressed to the mind through the external senses—and that the graces of the Spirit never were bestowed until after belief by the means above mentioned in correspondence with the promises, as explained by their fulfilment.

The infallible rule of interpretation of the scripture, is the scripture itself; and, therefore, when there is a question about

the true, and full meaning or sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, and contradictory, but one, and harmonious,) it may be searched, and known by other places that speak more plainly; the whole council of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory (as far as relates to man), man's salvation, faith, and life, being *expressly* set down in scripture, or by good, and necessary consequence, (supported by example and explanation) may be deduced from scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, reasonings, explanations, or the traditions of men. The things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for a life of faith, and for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in scripture, that not only the learned but the unlearned, in the due use of the ordinary means, consisting in the natural faculties of the mind, and the word of God, (which is of a supernatural, and divine character, established by God for that purpose) may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them; and that the word of God (which is committed wholly unto writing) dwelling plentifully in all those who, by the due exercise of their faculties receive it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience, and comfort of the scriptures may have hope. Influenced by these sentiments I will go on with farther illustrations, and proofs of what I have so often stated touching the means of spiritual knowledge, and faith, as opposed to the opinions of our day, and those which in a great degree have existed for a long time. When the kindred of the high priest had set Peter, and John in the midst of them, and asked them by what authority they had done the miracle? "Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he was made whole; be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified; whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole, &c. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there

is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." How consistent with intelligible, and rational principles is the faith of the Gospel here produced? No secret, mystic operation; but divine, and supernatural instruction, addressed to the mind by external communications, and manifestations through the senses, thus establishing the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ, of his absolute sovereignty, and the supreme authority of his government; and of the grace of God through him to the Jews, — God having raised up his Son Jesus Christ, sent him to bless the Jews, in turning away every one from his iniquities. How were they turned? By repentance. How was repentance obtained? By Jesus Christ being exalted by the right hand of God to give it, or grant it; which was effected by his death, and what they saw, and heard. The evidences of the resurrection, and the character which Christ sustained in the mediatorial government, were exhibited to our world in consequence of his exaltation, and by this they were enabled to believe and repent. That the power of repentance was conferred upon those who were convinced of sin, &c. by the death of Christ, and its meritorious relation to God's government, and the evidence, consisting in signs, and wonders, and words explanatory of them, is manifest from the Apostles *commanding* them to repent, under the evidence exhibited, that Christ was the Son of God, and Saviour.

In the 4th chapter of the Acts we find that the rulers, the elders, and the scribes, were offended that the resurrection from the dead should be preached through Jesus; but were puzzled to know what to do; for, said they, that a notable miracle hath been done by the Apostles is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it; and they also marvelled when they saw the boldness of Peter, and John; perceiving that they were unlearned and ignorant men. They called them, however, and commanded them that they should not speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus: to which the Apostles replied, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak of the things which we have *seen* and *heard*. Reader, recollect the Apostles were to bear witness of what they had seen, and heard, and

worked miracles in confirmation of their truth. They were threatened, and let go by the Jews; for they were afraid of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done; for the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed. This miracle was wrought in obedience to Christ's promise before he ascended: "and they who believe on me shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The disciples assembled themselves together after those threats; and they prayed to God, that he would grant unto them that with all boldness, they might speak his word, by stretching forth his hand to heal; and that signs, and wonders might be done by the name of the holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. This was agreeable to Christ's command, and promise before he left them. The first prayer he taught them, did not consist in a petition to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ; perhaps the reason was that he had not at that time sufficiently developed his real character, or actually died. Towards the close of his ministry he said unto his disciples; hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full--at that day when I shall shew you plainly of the Father, ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. It was in reference to the same gifts that Christ said, that his Father would give the Spirit unto them that ask him: the disciples, being filled with the Holy Ghost, agreeable to the request of their prayer, was a literal fulfilment of the promise. The house shaking, and the Apostles being filled with the Holy Ghost, were also agreeable to the promises of Christ in several other instances, "I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them to bless them. (Mathew 18. 19. 20.) He also told Peter, as I before observed, that he gave unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever, said he, thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and

whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Math. 16. 19. Correspondent with this, Peter was the first to preach to the Jews on the day of Pentecost; and also to the Gentiles; to Cornelius, and his friends several years after. It was by him that the miracle was performed on the lame man; and Ananias, and Sapphira were struck dead (5th chapter of the Acts) by lying unto God; in consequence of which great fear came upon all the church; and upon as many as heard these things—and, saith the historian, “by the hands of the Apostles were many signs, and wonders wrought among the people, *by which believers were the more added unto the Lord*, multitudes both of men, and women. So numerous were the miracles performed, that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter, passing by, might overshadow some of them; sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits were brought out of the cities about Jerusalem, and they were healed every one of them. After this the high priest put them into prison, but an angel opened it in the night, and directed them to go into the temple, and speak all the words of this life. The high priest had them brought before him, saying, did we not command you, that ye should not teach in this name; and behold you have filled Jerusalem with his doctrines, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Then Peter, and the other Apostles answered, and said, we ought to obey God rather than man. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince, and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; *and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

The faith which was produced by the operations of the Spirit in every instance detailed, and the words of the Holy Ghost speaking through the Apostles, were of the operation of God; and the belief of the record, (which gives an account of these operations, and the word of the Spirit by which they were explained, and applied to Jesus Christ in reveal-

ing his character, &c. is the faith of the operation of God also.

I now proceed to the case of Paul.—Saul had been a very bloody persecutor of the christians. As he went towards Damascus, suddenly there *shone round about him a light* from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and *heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? and he said who art thou Lord? And the Lord said I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; and he trembling, and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. Ananias, a disciple, who was at Damascus, the Lord said unto in a vision, arise, and go to Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight; and Ananias with great hesitation, through fear of Saul, on account of his former character, went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight *and be filled with the Holy Ghost*; and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith; and arose, and was baptized. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God—at which all Paul's former acquaintances were amazed; but Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, *proving that this is the very Christ.*—Let any person of common sense, and candour examine this instance of conversion, and say whether the miraculous appearance, and the words explanatory, did not convince Saul that Jesus Christ is the son of God; and whether the bestowment of the Spirit was not subsequent, and imparted by the laying on of Ananias's hands? None of the operations of our day, form any part of this distinguished conversion: Paul is convinced of sin, by the miraculous things which he *saw, and heard*, because he had not believed in Jesus Christ; and *after* believing he received the Ho-*

ly Ghost, agreeable to Christ's promise; and afterwards preached the Gospel by working of miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, pursuing the same plan to prove that he was the Son of God, which had been employed upon him at his conversion. That the above contains all that entered into the essential character, and nature of the divine agencies in Saul's conversion is manifest from Paul on two different occasions, detailing the same facts, without any hint at the operations of our day. In the 22d chapter of the Acts, Paul, in his defence before the Jews, said unto them, "as I made my journey, and was come nigh to Damascus, about noon, suddenly there *shone from heaven a great light* round about me, and I fell unto the ground, and *heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* And I answered who art thou Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest. The Lord said unto me, arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be *told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.* Ananias was sent, and said unto him, Brother Saul receive thy sight, and *he said the God of our Fathers hath chosen thee* that thou shouldest know his will, *and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.* For thou *shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen, and heard.* In the 26th chapter of Acts, Paul, in his defence before Agrippa, rehearses nearly the same facts; and observes that the "Lord said unto me arise, (when on the ground) and stand upon thy feet, for I have *appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister, and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;* delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee; *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."* He told Agrippa that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and having obtained help of God (by the gifts of the Holy Ghost) said he, I continue unto this day *witnessing both to small, and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets, and Moses did say should come: that*

Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shed light unto the people, and unto the Gentiles. Never was there a more clear, and intelligible narrative than is here exhibited—by the signs, and wonders, and voices explanatory, is Saul converted to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and thus convinced by this ample, and clear testimony, it was indeed hard for him to kick against the pricks of conscience, consisting in the clearest convictions from these overwhelming proofs; he, therefore, was not disobedient to the heavenly vision—but addressed himself to the work whereunto he was called, (*viz.*) in bearing witness unto all men of what he had *seen*, and *heard*; and particularly unto the Gentiles, to whom he was sent to open their eyes, and to turn them (by preaching the gospel, and working miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, in confirmation of its truth) from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that *they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ; urging the Gentiles that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.* There is not a single hint in these narratives of the operations which are contended for in our day; the external evidences prove the propositions taught, and the evidences are the signs, and wonders, and words explaining them;—all of which are of the Holy Ghost; for the miracles were wrought by him, and the words by which they were explained, were given to the Apostles by the Spirit that they might know, and teach the things of God. They were recorded by the direction of the Spirit under the literal fulfilment of the promise of Christ, and he (the Spirit,) shall take the things of mine, and shew them unto you, and bring all things to your remembrance; by which they not only wrote what Christ had told them, but also what was shewn to them after his resurrection. Paul seems to have been designed by Jesus Christ to fill the vacancy occasioned by the apostacy of Judas in the number of the twelve disciples. After the Saviour was crucified, and ascended, and before the day of Pentecost, the eleven cast lots, in order to determine whether Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed

Justus, or Matthias, should take part of the ministry, and Apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell—and the lot fell upon Matthias. The Holy Ghost was not then given; and it does not appear that the lot was of divine appointment. We hear no more of Matthias after he was chosen. When Paul was converted, “the Lord said unto Ananias, 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.” He was sent to testify of the things which he had seen; and of those things in the which Jesus Christ would appear unto him; to open the eyes of the Gentiles; to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. For these purposes he received the Holy Ghost; by which he was not only inspired with suitable knowledge; but was enabled to work miracles, in proof that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, &c. When he went to Damascus, instead of persecuting the christians, men, and women, he increased in strength in behalf of christianity; confounding the Jews; and *proving* that Jesus is the very Christ. Correspondent with these divine endowments by the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of working miracles which were bestowed upon him by Jesus Christ; Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, says, “I have whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which *Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient in word, and deed, through mighty signs, and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God;* so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. “He informs them that he strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest (saith he) I should build upon another man’s foundation; but as it is written (Isa. 52. 15.) they shall see, to whom nothing hath been told concerning him; and they who have not heard, shall understand. Correspondent with Paul’s commission, and divine endowments, before stated, he writes to the Corinthian Church, “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many Fathers; *for in Christ Jesus I have begotten*

you through the gospel. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. It was from Corinth that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. In that Epistle, he tells them, that he fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about unto Iliricum. How did he fully preach the Gospel? He tells them *by those things which Christ had wrought by him to make the Gentiles obedient in word, and deed.* These things consisted in *mighty signs, and wonders, wrought by the power of the Spirit of God.* Rom. 15. And also by the words of the Spirit, through which the mighty signs, and wonders, were applied to spiritual instruction, and faith, as on the day of Pentecost, and other occasions of a like nature. It was in this way that the Apostle preached the Gospel to the Corinthians, by reason of which they believed it; hence, in his Epistle to them, he says, “for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. And it is with a view to those mighty signs, and wonders, and the gifts of working them, that he saith to the Corinthians, “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” 1 Corinth. 4. And, on the same account, he tells them, in chapt. 2. 4, 5. “My speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, *but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* Connected with Paul’s declaration, 1 Corinth. 4. 20. “For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,” he asks, “what will ye?” Shall I come unto you with a *rod*, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” The Apostle terms the power of punishing obstinate offenders by miracle, a *rod*, as in striking Barjesus (or Elymas, by interpretation,) with blindness, who withstood Paul, and Barnabas; seeking to turn away Sergius Paulus from the faith, who desired to hear the word of God. Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fixed his eyes upon Elymas, and, after delineating his satanical character, said, “the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season;” and immediately he became blind. Then Sergius Paulus, *when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.* Acts 13. Which power was also manifested in Peter, when he struck Ananias, and Sapphira with death, for lying against God; by which great fear came upon all.

the church, and upon as many as heard these things. This was the power which, when exercised for chastisement, was called a rod, and, when exercised in confirmation of the Gospel, is called the *demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*; the power of signs, and wonders, and of imparting the gifts of the Spirit to them that believed, that the faith which was produced, and confirmed by them, and the words of the Holy Ghost, (for faith cometh by hearing) should not stand in the wisdom of men; but in the power of God.

So much for Paul, and his ministry.

We are informed, in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which gives an account of Paul's conversion, that there was at Lydda a man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. *And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, saw him, and turned to the Lord.* There was, also, a certain female disciple named Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is called Dorcas, who died; unto whom Peter was sent for by the disciples. After Peter came into the room where she lay, he put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise; and she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up; and he presented her alive to her friends, and the saints. And it was known throughout Joppa; and *many believed in the Lord.*

I must pause here, to ask my reader what were the operations which induced the many at Joppa, in the former case, *to believe in the Lord*; and, in the latter, *to turn to the Lord*? Were they not the miracles which were performed? Let us not go beyond what is written. In the case of Saul of Tarsus; what operations converted him? Were they not the light which shone round about him, and the voice which explained this manifestation of glory, and informed him that it was Jesus of Nazareth, whom he had persecuted, that was speaking to him? And was not the Holy Ghost imparted to him, *after* he believed, by the imposition of the hands of Ananias? "To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no

light in them." In order to form more distinct, and clear ideas upon the subject, let us abstract the light, and the voice from the case of Saul, which constituted those things which he saw, and heard; and, I ask, what is left to affect his mind, or convince his understanding? In the the two latter cases, abstract the miracles of healing the sick, and raising the dead; and what is there left to produce the belief in the Lord, and to turn the people to him? If we would learn the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in these, and all the other cases of conversion recorded; and understand the correct doctrine of spiritual operations; we must take them just as we find them, upon record; neither adding to, nor diminishing any thing in the history. Speculations here, beyond what is written, cannot fail involving practical absurdities. It was in this way that christianity was perverted, even in the Apostolic day. Theories were formed, and systems organized; which made it absolutely necessary to cover the most evident matters of fact; explained, and applied to practical purposes in the plainest, and most intelligible words, with profound obscurity, dark mysticism, and palpable contradictions. Hence it was, that the plan of celestial wisdom was subverted, in order to make way for *Human Divinity*; and, by these means, the principles, the plan, and the doctrines of revealed theology were brought into a certain subjection to the principles of philosophy, and science, falsely so called: the inevitable consequence of which was, first to destroy the consistency of divine truth, then to weaken its obligations, and, finally, to banish it almost from the world. (See pages 99, and 100 of this book for a more particular account of it.)

As I design to leave no occasion for the charge of partiality; or of having suppressed any of those cases of christian conversion, which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, for the purpose of establishing the true doctrine of spiritual operations, and their practical effect in producing of faith, I will next attend to the case of Cornelius.—Cornelius was a Centurion of the Italian band in Cesarea.—He was a devout man; and one that feared God, with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. An angel appeared unto him in a vision, and

said unto him, Cornelius, thy prayers, and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God. He then directed him to send for Peter, who would tell him what he should do; which he accordingly did. The messengers informed Peter that Cornelius, a just man, &c. was warned of God, by an holy angel, to send for him into his house, and to *hear words of him*. When Peter arrived, Cornelius; although a devout man, &c. fell down to worship him, not having had, as yet, proper instruction; but Peter forbade him, saying, I am also a man. After apologizing for coming to a Gentile's house, contrary to the custom of the Jews, by repeating what had been shewed to him, Peter asked Cornelius for what purpose he had sent for him? Cornelius rehearses to Peter what the angel told him, with his command to send for him, who, (said he) *when he cometh, shall speak unto thee*. Now, therefore, said Cornelius, are we all here present (himself, household, and friends) before God, to *hear all things that are commanded thee of God*. Reader, attend: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word of God sent unto the children of Israel," (it had not been sent unto the Gentiles until now by the hands of Peter, which was several years after the Jewish day of Pentecost) "preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all;) *that word I say ye know*; which was preached throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him—and *we are witnesses of all things* which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, *but to witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us*, who did eat, and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us (recollect their commission) to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick, and dead. To him gave all the pro-

phets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall have remission of sins." The proof of which, to Cornelius, and friends, was, that "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (the Jews) which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost." How did they know that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured out? Answer, "for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." And Peter, seeing that they had received the Holy Ghost, baptized them. The gifts of the Holy Ghost were not poured out upon Cornelius, and friends, until after they believed in Jesus Christ, as Peter told them, (having given them a minute history of him,) *that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* That the Holy Ghost fell upon them *after* they believed, is manifest from three considerations.—The first is, that the promise of Christ was, "these signs shall follow them that believe—they shall speak in new tongues," &c. which was precisely the case on the day of Pentecost; for it was only by the one hundred, and twenty *disciples* upon whom the Spirit was first poured; and Peter told the Jews, who were amazed at what they saw, and heard, that if they would repent, &c. they should receive the like gifts. The second consideration is, that Cornelius, and friends, were assembled together to hear Peter, on account of what the angel told Cornelius respecting him, by which they were entirely prepared, and pre-disposed to hear, and believe Peter in what he should tell them. Peter derived credibility, as a divine teacher, and witness, from what the angel said unto Cornelius. The last consideration, by which it is proven that they believed *before* the gifts of the Holy Ghost fell upon them, is derived from the defence that Peter made before the Apostles, who accused him for having gone to the Gentiles. He answers the accusation by rehearsing most particularly the mutual revelations made to himself, and Cornelius, and of his having complied with Cornelius's request, to instruct him in *the words whereby himself, and all his house should be saved;* and, says Peter. as I began to speak, *the*

Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. They remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. *For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us* WHO BELIEVED ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, what was I, that I could withstand God? When they (the Apostles) heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. John baptized his disciples after they believed; and, in like manner, the baptism of the Holy Ghost was promised to Christ's disciples, in the following words: "John indeed baptized with water: but ye (the Apostles, and disciples, Acts 1. 15. and 19. 4. Matth. 3. 11. Mark 1. 8. Luke 3. 16. John 1. 26.) shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." In no instance was the Holy Ghost bestowed, except upon believers; and those who were made so by what they saw, and heard. The reason for my being thus particular upon this subject, is, to shew the essential difference between the out-pourings of the Spirit, as predicted by the Prophets, promised by Christ, and fulfilled in the Apostolic day; and the *supposed* out-pourings in our time. Erroneous ideas upon this single point, in the minds of the teachers, and defenders of christianity, have produced more confusion, distraction, and run-mad enthusiasm, than all the others put together; as they have more vitally wounded its interests, defeated its progress, and clothed it, and its disciples with the character of unreasonableness, superstition, and bigotry, and *not without cause*. The immediate operations are now relied upon for the conversion of men, and not the word of God—in the days of the Apostles, conversion was effected by spiritual instruction, and evidence, addressed to the mind in intelligible terms, consisting in signs, and wonders, and words explaining them, before the Spirit was received; which signs, and wonders were *wrought* by the Holy Ghost, as were the words *revealed* by the Holy Ghost, which explained them, in ascertaining the character of Jesus Christ, &c. After belief was effected by these means, the Spirit was given; but, since the Apostolic day, the Spirit has been thought to produce faith, or regeneration, *before*

the successful use of the means of instruction, and faith. Hence the difference between the preaching of the Apostles, and those who have succeeded them: hence, too, the origin of antinomianism, and all the approaches to it. It is thus that the means (which are in this day of record) which produced faith in the Apostolic day, and without which faith never was produced since Christ's ascension; are considered as without meaning, and of none effect, before the *immediate* operations of the Spirit; which is manifestly a perversion of the true order of things. The operations of the Spirit, and the purposes for which his gifts were received, in the Apostolic day, are entirely misapprehended; and, to supply their place, according to those misapprehensions, passion, feeling, and imagination, are substituted, and when excited by, or employed upon religious subjects, are attributed to his immediate inspiration, &c. with all their attendant, and consequent absurdities; which will hereafter be shewn. We are to live by the faith of the Son of God, which is the evidence or assurance of things not seen; established in the mind by its proper proof, and not by sight or sense, except as they are *subservient*.

We must not forget, that, in the case of Cornelius, Peter distinctly told him, that he had *heard*, and *that he knew*, the word which was preached throughout all Judea, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil, &c. &c. By these things, together with the knowledge Cornelius derived from the Jews, (for the messengers to Peter told him that he was a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews,) he acquired that knowledge, and conviction of divine things, which were necessary for his devoutness, although it was not sufficient to worship God through the Saviour; for he fell down at Peter's feet, and worshipped him, when he was coming into his house. Peter's instruction was necessary, in order to such worship, or the teaching of the Holy Ghost through Peter; by which Cornelius, and friends were taught of God, and converted to christianity; after which they were sealed by the Spirit of promise, and spake in other tongues as the Spirit gave

them utterance. For as much then as God gave them (the Gentiles) the like gifts as he did unto the Jews *who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ* on the Jewish day of Pentecost; it demonstrates *now*, as it demonstrated then, that God also hath to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life; and it is upon evidence like this alone that it can be believed—but where have we such evidence, except in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

I will bestow some attention upon the case of Lydia, recorded in the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

This case is relied on more to prove the opinions relative to the *immediate* operations of the Spirit in conversion, than any other which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and on no other account than because it is said *that the Lord opened Lydia's heart that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul*. It is never asked whether *any means* were employed in opening her heart, and, if any, what they were? Such an inquiry might produce a conclusion against the doctrine of immediate agencies. With me there is no doubt; nor can there be any, according to the principles established, and the proofs adduced, that the Lord opened Lydia's heart to attend unto the things which were spoken of Paul. I think I have abundantly proven, in the preceding chapter, that *no means, merely natural or human*, could possibly have done it. The impossibility of this, is in perfect unison with the plan employed by Christ before, and, through the Apostles, by the Holy Ghost, since his ascension; nothing merely human or natural were employed. The only question is, whether her heart was opened to attend unto Paul, by *instrumentalities of a spiritual, and divine character*? To this question, I answer in the affirmative; and think, that the regular, and established plan of the divine administrations amongst mankind, as intelligent, and moral beings; after the Gospel first began to be preached at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, (as exhibited in the examination of the manner, the means, and the effects of teaching, and preaching in the foregoing pages of this chapter, until the case of Lydia occurred,) establishes it. The case of Lydia furnishes testimony itself to the same purpose.

Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, says, "A vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." They accordingly went "to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: And we (says Luke) were in that city, abiding certain days. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, *and spake unto the women which resorted thither*. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, *which worshipped God, heard us*; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, &c." There is a very striking resemblance between the case of Cornelius, and Lydia. It seems that they were both worshippers of God before the Gospel was preached to them by the Apostles. Peter, by an angel, was sent to Cornelius, several years after the Gospel was first preached at Jerusalem; and Paul was sent into Macedonia by a man whom he saw in a vision, where he met with Lydia. This was, as computed by chronologers, about twenty two years after the Gospel began to be preached at Jerusalem. That Paul imparted spiritual gifts, as he was accustomed to do, by the imposition of his hands to the members of the church at Philippi, is evident from the 3^d verse of the second chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians, in which he cautions them against strife, and vain glory, in the exercise of their spiritual gifts; as was too much the case in the church at Corinth. (Corinth. 14.) Lydia, probably, at the time Paul instructed her, was in a state of acceptance with God, as Rahab was; whose faith (produced by hearing how the Lord dried up the water of the red sea for the Israelites to pass through, when they came out of Egypt,) was counted to her for righteousness;—having secretly received, and concealed the spies who were sent by Joshua to Jerico, and sent them away by a different road from that which she knew their pursuers would go. Josh. 2. 3—11. Heb. 11. 31. James 2. 25. Rahab believed from what she heard, that the Lord, the God of Israel, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. This faith was produced by the Spirit, and power of God, in the miracles

which were wrought. God declared that he designed by the miracles, the signs, and the wonders which he wrought in Egypt, and in favour of the children of Israel, to make known, and establish his name upon the earth.

Lydia, after she believed, may have received the Holy Ghost as did Cornelius; and Paul may have wrought miracles before her eyes in the name of Jesus Christ, by which her heart was opened to attend unto what he said; or, he might have told her, (which he most probably did,) that he was sent by the Holy Ghost to instruct her; having gathered, as Luke observes, that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel unto them in Macedonia. The Lord opened the hearts of the three thousand, and of the five thousand, to attend unto what Peter said, and by which they were converted—he did this by the signs, and wonders, on the day of Pentecost; and the miracle, in healing the lame man, which *they saw, and heard*. I pass on to the case of the Jailor.

The conversion of the jailor, and house, was effected by miracles; for, says the historian, “At midnight, Paul, and Silas (having their feet made fast in the stocks, in the inner prison,) prayed, and sang praises to God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earth-quake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, (he probably slept in a part of the prison,) he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul, and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (The answer is a plain one.) “And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*”

The great earth-quake, together with the penalty which seems to have been annexed to the keepers of prisoners letting them go, were probably the cause of the jailor trembling. Peter, when confined in jail, was rescued by an an-

gel; and Herod commanded that the keepers of the jail should be put to death. Acts 12. 7—19. The jailor saw, and felt that there was safety no where but in the faith of Paul, and Silas; and in their God. Hence the inquiry, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” To which the answer was plain, and the ground of safety easy with the evidence before him, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

It appears, from all the cases recorded of the prophecies in the Old Testament; and the fulfilment of Christ’s promises in the New; relative to the operations, and gifts of the Spirit, that they were designed to establish a new epoch in the government of God in his dispensations of grace; by developing to mankind an ample view of the great purposes of heaven, the glory of God in the redemption of men, and their true relations to the invisible world; as well as to restore the union, and communion with God, which were lost by transgression, upon supernatural, divine, and gracious principles, through the Redeemer, by faith in him.

Section 4.

The necessity, design, and use of the miraculous operations, and gifts of the Spirit in the establishment of the Gospel in the days of Christ, and the Apostles; and their use in its extension, and perpetuation.

The mediatorial government of Jesus Christ, had two objects in view. The first was, by his vicarious sufferings, to reconcile the salvation of sinners with the justice of God; and thereby maintain the honour, and purity of his throne, in the redemption of man. The second object was, the exposition of the plan of redemption to man, as an intellectual, and moral being; who is the immediate subject of the government, and for whose benefit it was established. The means for the accomplishment of those purposes are of divine appointment. With respect to the nature, and sufficiency of the atonement, through which God is reconciling the world unto himself, it is *enough* that he has declared himself well pleased with it; and that he is willing for Christ’s sake to

pardon sin, and receive the sinner into favour, on condition of repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ; as it is through his revelations only, that we have any knowledge of it, or its character. The ways, and means which God has employed, in developing the plan of redemption to man as an intellectual, and moral being; and as a subject of the government; and of establishing it by divine authority, are susceptible of particular examination, and their fitness capable of being clearly perceived, and forcibly felt: Not by the trees of the forest, nor the beasts of the field; but by intelligent man, in the due use of his mental powers upon the supernatural, and divine means of instruction; which have been furnished by the Spirit of God, and accommodated to the fallen, and spiritually blinded state of man—blind by nature to every thing of a spiritual, and divine character, not only as to *quality* but *real existence*. Every thing in the dispensation of grace, (the love of God, the sacrifice for sin, the means employed in communicating the knowledge of them) are so far beyond the deductions of human reason; that when declared, and made manifest, they exhibit the most astonishing events that fall within the compass of it. The revelation of a design of mercy, and a promise of forgiveness through a Messiah, was as stupendous an instance of divine benignity, as it was from a necessity of nature, and of mind, utterly beyond the conception of man without that revelation; although as necessary for his present intellectual, and moral improvement, and comfort, as redemption was to his future happiness. In this amazing transaction, as formerly observed; we must look higher than any dealings had with man, viz. to the eternal purposes of God concerning his restoration; wherein “the lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.” R. v. 13. 8. And “the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Titus 1. 2. In the will, and works of God, every thing is impenetrable to man, further than he declares them. Had the death of Jesus Christ been designed, by the divine mind, only to expiate for transgression, it would not have been necessary to exhibit the sufferings of Messiah to our race. The *manifestation* of God in the flesh *to mankind*, or *to angels*; his being *preached to Jews or Gentiles*; or *believ-*

ed on in the world, would have been unnecessary. The death of the Saviour was not only intended to expiate for sin, but, also, to *manifest the glory of God*; his goodness, and severity, in the redemption of man; to intelligent beings, and, in a striking, and affecting manner, to man himself, as a moral being, placed, by the death of Christ, in a state of *gracious* probation, as preparatory to the enjoyment of God in heaven. In order to this, the scenes exhibited in the hour of his sufferings; the divine, and supernatural attestations of their true character, and relations, together with the glory that followed; were necessary to be made in the manner, and form in which they were manifested, as the only means by which the weak, and humble capacity of the human mind, could be reached, and the heart be affected. It is by these means, employed in consequence of the vicarious, and meritorious death of Immanuel, that the understanding, which was before darkened, and the heart, which was alienated from the life of God through ignorance, are renewed in spirit; and the creature enabled to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness. He is thus enabled to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. Constructed, and formed as the human mind is; accessible only through the senses; (except by the immediate inspirations of God's Spirit; which is not his method of communication, only when *new ORIGINAL ideas*, and knowledge are to be imparted;) and being united to a body susceptible of pain, and pleasure, from the different conditions of which it derives its principal ideas of happiness, and misery, and its leading motives of action; and being, by a necessity of nature, and the natural œconomy, as existing between God, and itself, ignorant of supernatural, and spiritual things, and relations, and its own connection with the invisible world, naturally; no other plan than the one adopted by divine wisdom, both as to the manner, and the matter of communication, together with the ordinances, &c. embraced in the promulgation, and establishment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, could have answered the purposes intended. Every thing in that stupendous scheme is adapted to the condition of man, in his fal-

len, natural state; and is perfectly suited, by its supernatural, and divine fitness, to exalt humanity from a state of sensuality, and nature, to a spiritual, and divine character. This is effected by the Spirit of God, through those means, working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ, who is the mediator between God, and man. Every mean employed for this purpose, is supernatural, when apprehended in its proper character; and never can produce its proper effect upon the mind, until it is thus apprehended; it derives its meaning from the explanation of God's Spirit in words, and is not otherwise known—as for example:

The human nature of Jesus Christ was created by the *immediate* power of the Holy Ghost—this had not been known to the human race, but for the revelations of God's Spirit. He was a teacher come from God—this had not been known, but by his divine credentials, consisting in working miracles, and their explanations by the words of God's Spirit, to establish the fact. His body was consecrated a sacrifice for sin, by the adorable Jehovah—this had not been known to our world, but by the revelations of God in words. He was exalted by the right hand of God, a Prince, and a Saviour, in his human body, glorified, until the restitution of all things—the only competent proof of this, consisted in the out-pourings of the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven in signs, and wonders, and words explanatory; by whose inspirations ignorant, and unlearned men, who had believed by the evidence they previously received, were enabled to speak in tongues before unknown, the wonderful works of God. Acts 2. 7—11. It was determined by God, that, by virtue of the meritorious death of Jesus Christ, his resurrection, and intercession, that both great, and small of the human race, should, by the power of the Holy Ghost, be raised from the dead—this had not been known, and believed, but for the actual resurrection of the Saviour from the dead, and others; the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by whose power the dead are to be raised, and the assurances made in words, and sanctioned by miracles, that the fact will be realized by every individual. God determined to destroy the present heavens, and earth; and to create new ones; and also to have a future judgment at the

close of the mediatorial dispensation. These had not been known, but by the revelation of his decrees upon these subjects in words, and established by supernatural evidence. He has also decreed, that the salvation of men's souls, and bodies are to be secured by faith in Jesus Christ, in his proper characters; and that this fallen province of his government should be administered by him as *the Prince of Peace*. These things had not been known, but by his revelations in words, nor believed in, but by the demonstrations of the Holy Ghost in signs, and wonders. In accommodation to man, in relation to his God, who is not an object of sense; and for the purpose of aiding him in spiritual knowledge, and a life of faith; and to promote the order, and happiness of society; God saw it necessary to consecrate a seventh portion of time for his peculiar worship; and called it *a day of rest*. This is exclusively of divine appointment; and could not have been discovered as having any relation to, or connection with, the everlasting rest of the saints in heaven, had it not have been revealed. It is from divine stipulation that the Sabbath is an emblem of the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. All the nations in Christendom have seen, and felt, the necessity of this appropriation of time, as established by divine appointment, in order to the preservation of public morals, and of their political, and civil institutions. Atheistical France, at one time; when on the high tide of *mental perfectability*, to the exclusion of every thing divine; spurned the sacraments, and ordinances of heaven; and even the *idea* of a God, as obstacles, and encumbrances to their bold march to perfection, in the development of the intellectual, and moral faculties of man, and the attainment of the highest state of individual, and political happiness. The uncontrollable licentiousness, however, and the horror-smiting scenes of blood, and carnage, and every abomination that followed, portended the entire extermination of every thing that characterized civilized life, and of the annihilation of the nation itself. These compelled the national council to substitute the *Decades* (which is a tenth portion of time) for the christian Sabbath; and to decree that the *IDEA* of a God, in the mind of the nation,

was necessary to the preservation of civil order, and morality. Such is the necessary practical fitness in the ordinances, and appointments of heaven, for the intellectual, moral, social, civil, and religious interests, and improvements of man. Those religious denominations, who affect to attach but little importance to the Sabbath, and its divine exercises, are assuredly ignorant of how much they conduce to the corruption of good manners, and the demoralization of the people. They also forsake their own blessings, and abuse their own privileges. The earthly Sabbath is a symbolical representation of the heavenly rest, which remaineth to the people of God. In the heavenly Sabbath, the saints will rest from their work of trial, and from all the evils they are subject to in the present life; and shall recollect the labours they have undergone, the dangers they have escaped, and the temptations they have overcome. And, by reflecting on these things, and on the method of their salvation, they shall be unspeakably happy. Being admitted into the immediate presence of God, to worship, they shall pass a perpetual Sabbath in those elevations of pure devotion which the sublimest moments of their most sacred, and happy days, can teach them but imperfectly to conceive. The exercises of the earthly Sabbath are preparatory to the enjoyment of the heavenly.

With an eye to the same purpose for which the Sabbath was instituted, and with a view to the same end, were the sacraments of baptism, and the supper established. By the former is represented, as used, and explained by Christ, and the Apostles, the renovating influence of the faith of the Gospel; the resurrection of the Saviour from the dead, by the Holy Ghost: it is also used as a symbolical representation of the resurrection of the believer by the power of God, exerted in consequence of the vicarious, and meritorious death, the triumphant resurrection, and victorious reign of Immanuel. The supper is used as a memorial of the sufferings, and death of the Redeemer. These sacraments are only influential upon the minds of men, and suitable for practical purposes, in spiritual knowledge, and devotion, as they are explained by the Spirit of God, who alone knoweth the things of God in the record of his Son. It is in this

away, according to the established order of God's throne; that the mind is accessable to divine instruction since immediate inspirations ceased. The meaning of all these things, when rightly apprehended in the explanations given by the Spirit of God, is; that man, though a poor worm of the dust, brought low by sin, and thereby discovered from the communion of his God, is a candidate for the skies, through the death, and mediation of the Prince of Peace—that, being a passenger through this world, his present state of being is a state of gracious probation; and death a door through which he obtains an entrance into the spiritual, and invisible world; and that faith in Jesus Christ is the only ground of acceptance with God, and admission into the celestial abodes of happiness, and glory, forevermore.

In the commencement of the Gospel dispensation, it was necessary that Apostles, and witnesses be appointed, and disciplined, for the purpose of bearing witness to what they had seen, and heard, during the personal ministry of the Saviour; and also to what appeared at his death, resurrection, and ascension; and that they should all be influenced by the same Spirit, and agree in their testimony; and, by *a supernatural, miraculous, and divine power*, to break through the strong holds which natural appetite, and desire; natural experience, and the objects of time, and sense, had erected, and established in the opinions, and hearts of mankind; and to establish a divine, and supernatural order of things, upon the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the twelve Apostles were appointed, and received the Holy Ghost; by whose gifts, and graces, they were enabled to surmount all opposition; and to establish the truth of what they asserted to be true, by divine attestations. As it was not according to the plan of divine wisdom that the gifts, and miraculous powers of the Spirit, by which the Gospel was first published, and established, should continue after a certain period; it was necessary that its principles, and evidences should be recorded with faithfulness, and truth; and be made the standing mean for the spiritual edification, and faith of succeeding ages. Accordingly, the Spirit of Truth, having fully disclosed, and established the Gospel by the Apostles, after the ascension of the Saviour; agreeably to

his promise, "When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and shew you things to come: he shall glorify me; for he shall receive mine, and shew it unto you." I say, agreeably to these promises, and others of a like nature, the Holy Ghost, by inspiration, directed the Apostles, both as to the *matter*, and *manner*, in committing to record the Gospel, as we have it in the New Testament; which is the storehouse of gracious truth, and is the glass of spiritual perception; the light by which the mind looks at things not seen; and is the only mean of ameliorating the human character; and indeed of civilization, properly speaking; as it is by the principles of the Gospel that humanity is assimilated into a resemblance of the divine Redeemer. From this record, the world derives all the correct information upon divine subjects. It is by reason of its having been thus indicated, that it is called the Word of God, and Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was by reason of the character which the Apostles sustained, as above described, that they were the depositories of the divine gifts, and graces. Christ said, that, as God had sent him, his disciple to the world, so he sent them, his disciples to the world. In the mediatorial prayer of the Redeemer to his Father, he said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world;—*I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.* I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them that thou gavest me. And now I am no more in the world, but *these are in the world*, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. I have given them thy word, &c. Neither pray I for these alone, (the Apostles) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *that they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have giv-*

en them, that they may be one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17. In correspondence with Christ's expression, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them—that the world may know that thou hast sent me, Paul, in 2 Corinth. 4. 5—7. saith, (in the language of Macknight's translation, and commentary,) Now, though we Apostles are the images of Christ, (chapt. 3. 18.) *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, as your Lord, and ourselves, who are his images, we preach as your servants, for the purpose of teaching you the Gospel of Jesus. And we are well qualified to do so—For God, who, at the creation, commanded light to shine out of darkness; he hath shined, not upon our faces, but into our hearts, to give you, not a corporeal light, but the LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God; not as it appeared in Moses' face, but as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. But we Apostles, who have this treasure of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, are earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power by which the world is enlightened, and converted, and we ourselves are preserved, might be known to be God's, and not belonging to us.*"

The Apostles, in manifesting the knowledge of the glory of God, did it by the exercise of the glory which Christ gave to them, displayed in miracles, and signs, and wonders, and the inspirations of the Spirit; so that their teaching, and preaching, should not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstrations of the Spirit, and of power; that the faith of those who believed by their teaching should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinth. 2. 4. 5. According to these gifts, and graces, John was in the Spirit when in the Isle of Patmos; he was commanded to write the things which he had seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. All that the Apostles wrote was of divine inspi-

ration; as the miracles which they wrought were by the Holy Ghost. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. 3. 16. No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; or, as it is more consistently rendered, in connexion with the subsequent verse; no prophecy of scripture is of private, or of the prophets own invention. For never, at any time, was a prophecy brought by the will of man, but holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. 1. 20. 21. Christ wrote nothing, himself, when in our world; that task he imposed upon the Apostles, who were, in the execution of it, directed by the Holy Ghost, who brought all things to their remembrance that Christ had told them before his death, during the three years of his instruction, and ministry; he shewed them the things of Christ, as they related to him in his glorified, and exalted character, and taught them things to come, which we call prophecies. These things are written, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; and hence they are called the words of God. Nothing is derived from nature in the record—it is all supernatural, and divine; and, as written, it is the light of the world, and the light of life—the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We may very readily perceive the relation that all succeeding ages have borne to the gifts, and graces of the Apostles, in the establishment of the Gospel. The word of God, which is the mean, as well as the rule of faith, is wholly committed to record, unto which nothing is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men; for “if any man shall add unto, or take away from the words of the book of God, God will take away his part out of the book of life.” The preaching of the Gospel, since the canon of scripture closed, has consisted in nothing more nor less than in teaching what is written, and relying on the evidence there given for the belief of its truths. The Spirit has given no other revelations of God, nor has he tendered any other evidence of divine truth, than what we have in the record. Every part of the system was completed, and indicted, more than seventeen hundred years

ago; and are the means ordained of God, through all succeeding ages, for producing the same spiritual ideas, knowledge, perception, and faith, which they produced during the ministry of Christ, and the Apostles. Every portion of the human family, who inhabits the globe, are as necessarily dependent upon this original record, and the earlier revelations, and the light which has emanated from them, for spiritual knowledge; and particularly upon the Gospel, as written, for faith in Jesus Christ, as they are dependent upon the matter, its principles, and laws, which were created near six thousand years ago, for natural, and material operations, and effects. Hence the necessity of communicating or teaching out of the record, the ideas which its stipulated signs, or the words, and sentences of which it is composed, contains, in order to the extension, and perpetuation, in the minds of men, of the truths of the Gospel; and hence the use of bibles, of missionaries, of preachers, and teachers, &c. It is by the spiritual knowledge, and the faith thus derived, and produced, that those who possess them are said to build upon the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. The experience of all ages since the Apostles; and the necessity under which every person is born into the world, of being instructed from the scriptures, in acquiring a knowledge of the supernatural, and divine things which they contain, in order to their influence upon the intellectual, and moral character of men, and nations, can leave but one opinion as to the truth of the above remarks. No person is born with hereditary knowledge; and, least of all, with that which is supernatural, and spiritual; nor does nature afford any of the means by which it can be originated. From the nature, and necessity of things, in the order established by divine wisdom, as they relate to the human mind, in regard to spiritual ideas, and which is proven by the experience, and observation of all ages, and countries, since the time of the Apostles, we are authorised to draw the following conclusions: (viz.) that, with the Apostles, the Deity sustained a three-fold relation in respect to his presence; with the christians who have succeeded them, he has sustained a two-fold relation; and with the atheist one. With the Apostles he was essentially present, and

supported their natural existences by grace, as he has been with the christians, and atheists since. He was present with the Apostles, in a miraculous, and supernatural point of view, by which he revealed to them, and those to whom they ministered his essential presence in a gracious character, and, without which, his existence, presence, and grace, were not known. To the christians, since the miraculous days, he is present by faith; that is, his presence is perceived by the eye of the mind through the revelations he gave to the Apostles, and by which the knowledge of him, and his character, is acquired. To the atheist, although present, and graciously so too, as it is owing to grace that he is not destroyed, he is neither seen or known. This was the case with the Athenians when Paul preached unto them the *unknown God*; who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; it being in him they lived, and moved, and had their being, although ignorant of it. Some, by Paul's teaching, were instructed, and believed. Of the same character were the Gentiles, who were without God in the world—atheists—unto whom Paul was sent to preach; to turn them *from darkness to light*, and from the power of Satan unto God. The way in which he accomplished these ends, consisted in doing those things which Christ wrought by him, *to make the Gentiles obedient in WORD, and DEED, through mighty signs, and wonders. by the power of the Spirit of God*; and explaining the things of God by spiritual words, or the words of the Spirit; and thus he begat them in Christ by his Gospel; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God—for, having wiled it, God begat them through Paul by the Gospel.

Section 5.

The same subject continued; with a more particular examination of the gifts of the Spirit to common believers in the churches in the Apostolic day; and their use in the government of the churches by the Apostles.

The most fruitful source of error, perhaps, of all others; since the days of the Apostles, has been, is not distinguish-

ing between the gifts of the Spirit which were conferred on believers then, in consequence of believing, and by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles; and the effects of believing since. A comparison between the operations of the Spirit, in the first ages of christianity, in the believer, and those which were employed in the signs, and wonders, wrought by the Apostles, in order to belief; and the *supposed* operations of our day, would exhibit a strange contrast, indeed. Although this is true in respect to the *operations* of the Spirit, as distinguished between the present time, and the first age of the church, yet it is equally true, that the *genuine fruits of the Spirit, then, and now, are the same.* By substituting imagination, feeling, and passion, for the real gifts of the Spirit, christianity has greatly suffered since those gifts ceased. Those *spurious* operations have produced divisions, and sub-divisions, in an almost endless variety in the christian church; and every sect seeks to establish its own peculiar opinions by these spiritual operations. The operations, and revelations of the Spirit, in the Apostolic day, were susceptible of *sensible demonstration*—they manifested themselves by supernatural matters of fact. The possessors of those gifts exercised them in working of miracles; in healing the sick; in prophesying; in the discerning of spirits; in the use of divers tongues; and in the interpretation of tongues. The operations, and gifts of the Spirit, in our day, manifest themselves in none of those ways; and if we are not restricted to the record for our spiritual knowledge, and to the belief of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, aided by the providences of God, &c. in the excitement of the religious affections, the joys, and transports, which the christian experiences, when contemplating by faith the glories of the eternal world, and the inheritance of the saints, we have no proper foundation for our hope: We do not build upon the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

If it is not agreed, that the revelations, and operations of the Spirit of God, recorded, are the means of spiritual knowledge, and faith; and if the religious feelings, and affections, are not the *consequences* of Gospel knowledge, and faith, and the religious exercises of the mind; it may, with truth, be

doubted, whether the Gospel was ever designed by God for the present inhabitants of the globe, or period of the world; for no other description of the operations of the Spirit were promised for the establishment of the Gospel; or have been employed since it began to be preached, than those recorded, (which I have attended to, as described in the Acts of the Apostles,) and they do not now exist, in *real action*, as in the first age of the christian church; nor are they to be found any where except in the record. Nor do the inhabitants of christian countries differ in any thing from the pagan world, only as that difference is produced by the Gospel Record upon their intellectual, and moral characters. The agencies of God's Spirit are as much employed in sustaining the natural existence, and powers of the human body, and soul of the heathen, as the christian world; they however, do not know it. Admitting the revelations of the Spirit, and his operations as recorded, as the instrumental causes, established by God for spiritual knowledge, and faith; in connection with his providences, and ordinances, and all difficulties vanish. Nor could it be possible, with such an admission, *honestly, consistently, and conscientiously made*, for men to differ essentially upon the fundamental principles of the Gospel. The same spiritual ideas, and knowledge; and the same faith, would be produced in every mind; because the same words, and sentences, the stipulated signs of ideas; and the same signs, and wonders, and miraculous operations of the Spirit, would be exclusively relied on for these purposes. Men would soon see eye to eye; and the scriptures would be read, and studied by them with increasing advantage—their devotions would be the devotions of an enlightened faith—they would grow in spiritual knowledge, and would live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God: "For the righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this wise, say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above—Or, who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith," which is recorded in the Gospel, and was preached by the Apostles, "that if thou shalt confess with thy

mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10. 6—10.

Miraculous, and supernatural means were employed in the establishment of the Jewish, and Christian religions. These are the only religions which are supported by such evidence. In the first age of christianity, the immediate, and miraculous operations of the Spirit, seem to have been indispensably necessary. How christianity could have been established, and propagated in its commencement without miracles, and the gifts of the Spirit, which were conferred on believers in confirmation of the divinity of the Gospel, and for their edification, I cannot conceive. At that time there was no Gospel record; the gifts, and graces of the Spirit, and the teaching of the Apostles, seem to have supplied its place. The Spirit taught the mind, by *immediate* inspirations, and revelations, *then*, what it learns from the record of them *now*. Agreeably to Christ's promises, the Spirit was to bring to the recollection of the Apostles what he had told them; this *we* are taught by what they have written, guided immediately by the Spirit, in the literal fulfilment of that promise. The Spirit was to take, and, by immediate revelation, shew to them the things of Christ, when in his glorious mediatorial throne; these, *we* are taught by the record of those things which the Spirit shewed them, agreeably to the promise. The Spirit was to teach them things to come; these, *we* learn, by what they have written concerning future events. *We have no true spiritual idea whose sign is not in the record, whether it relates to past, present, or future things.* These signs, which are the words of God's Spirit, were stipulated by the Holy Ghost; and without them there are no spiritual ideas in the human mind:—Immediate revelations having ceased, by which those signs were first established, the propagation of spiritual ideas, and knowledge, is through the instrumentality of those signs which compose the word of God. This truth is conceded by all, except phrenzied enthusiasts, the quakers, and shakers, and those other religionists who approach to them. When any of them can exhibit an original spiritual idea, whose sign is not found in the word of God as the mean by which it was produced, I will yield the

point; and acknowledge that I have done them much wrong. As long as the signs of their ideas are found there; or the constituent parts are, by the record, furnished to their imaginations as the materials out of which they have formed new associations or combinations of them; and their imaginations are possessed of their natural powers; they have as little reason to claim *immediate* revelations, as a mechanic has, for asserting that the materials which he employs in constructing a watch, or in building an house, were immediately created by the Spirit of God to his hand—or that their particular arrangement in the construction of the watch, or house, is effected by immediate miraculous inspirations, and power.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were imparted by the laying on of the Apostle's hands in the name of Jesus Christ, seem to have been the divine credentials by which they established their own commission, as teachers sent from God, the divinity of the Saviour, and the authority of the Gospel truth. Without these gifts, I cannot conceive how the churches could have been established, in opposition to all the natural, and artificial obstacles which were opposed to them; or how they could have been governed by the Apostles. Difficulties surrounded them from every quarter. The long established authority of *Judaism*, from whence arose a most violent, and persecuting opposition; the ignorance, and corruption of the Gentile world, who were wholly given to idolatry; and the strength which their passions, lusts, pride, and imaginations, derived from their peculiar forms, rites, and ceremonies of worship, rendered the gifts of the Spirit indispensable. Paul, when writing to the several churches, derives all his authority for the correction of their errors, and the establishment of the truth, from the spiritual gifts which he imparted to them, and the miracles which he wrought amongst them by the Holy Ghost. His Epistle to the Romans he commences by a short recapitulation of his miraculous appointment to preach the Gospel, and the supernatural evidence of its truth. His introduction is in the following words: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle," (Acts 9. 3—16. and 22. 14—15. and 26. 16—18.) "separated unto the Gospel

of God (Acts 13. 1—3.) (which he had promised afore by his Prophets in the holy scriptures) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, *and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead; BY WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED GRACE, AND APOSTLESHIP, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name; among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.*” In another place of this Epistle, when speaking in a more explicit manner respecting his divine commission, he says, “I have whereof I may glory through Christ Jesus, in those things which pertain to God; for I will not dare to speak of those things *which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.*” In reference to the spiritual instruction thus divinely, and supernaturally given, and established; and the gifts of the Spirit which followed those that believed, he observes: “Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that ye may abound in hope through *the power of the Holy Ghost.*” The *grace, and Apostleship* which Paul tells the Roman church he received from Jesus Christ our Lord, consisted in the **MIRACULOUS POWERS**, as well as the *inspirations, and revelations of the Spirit*; by which he was separated unto the Gospel of God, in order that, through his preaching, Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, the obedience of faith might be given to him among the Gentiles, on account of his being the Son of God.

It was by an appeal to those supernatural matters of fact, the power of working miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which even many of the common believers possessed, that Paul obtained his authority amongst the members of the Roman church.

The introductory part of all Paul’s Epistles, contains a short account of the nature of his Apostleship; and of the manner in which he was set apart for the work of the ministry; as exhibited in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans: the true meaning of which is explained in the 9th, the 22nd, and 26th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. In every Epistle he refers the church to the gifts of the Spirit

which its members received by him, or some of the other Apostles, consisting either in the power of speaking in unknown tongues, in the interpretation of tongues, or some other miraculous gift. By a reference to these he proved his Apostolic character, and thereby was enabled to dictate with authority in correcting the errors which obtained in the churches. Those very gifts which he imparted, and of which they were conscious, together with the miracles he wrought amongst them to demonstrate the truth of what he taught, and *to make the Gentiles obedient in word, and deed*, conferred upon him the authoritative character of a divine teacher, and governor. By these means the Apostles manifested the glory which Jesus Christ gave unto them, (John 17. 20. 22.) that the world might believe on him through their word. This was the method which Moses pursued in the government of the children of Israel, as is manifest from the history of his administrations, or of God through him. In his farewell address, contained in Deuteronomy, and particularly in the 4th chapter, it is evidently seen, (contrary to the assertions of many of the enemies, and opposers of revealed religion, who declare that the communications of God to Moses were *secret*, and only pretended,) that Moses refers the Israelites, for the truth, and authority of what he taught them, to what they SAW, and HEARD. It was amidst one of the most tremendous scenes of a *sensible* miraculous description that the world ever witnessed, that the ten commandments were published in the hearing of all Israel. As a proof of this, Moses, after describing it in minute detail, tells the Israelites, “the Lord spake unto you out of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. And *he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments*; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. Deut. 4. 12. 13. Paul, in like manner, in one of his Epistles to the Corinthians, (amongst whom, attempts by a false teacher had been made to disparage him, and weaken his authority,) tells them, “I ought to have been commended of you; for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles; though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought amongst you in all patience, in signs, and wonders,

and mighty deeds. 2 Corinth. 12. 11. 12. In several parts of those Epistles he refers directly to the spiritual gifts of the common believers, which some of them seemed disposed to use in vain glory. He urges them to use their gifts, which they had received from the Spirit, to godly edifying—to be more desirous of instructing the church by intelligible words, than to speak in unknown tongues. 1 Corinth. 14, which see. In one part of these Epistles he enumerates the gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinth. 12. 4—11. These miraculous gifts of the Spirit had no saving influence in them, having been received in *consequence* of their faith; nor did they, by any *necessary impulse*, direct their possessors into the *obedience* of faith. Paul's Epistles were designed for this, and to correct the abuses which were made of those very gifts by their possessors.—Read the 14th chapter of 1 Corinth.

In the two first chapters of his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul is very particular in describing his appointment to be an Apostle, and also the nature, and character of Jesus Christ, and his Gospel. He tells them that he neither received the Gospel of man, nor was he taught it, but by the revelations of Jesus Christ. After making a very clear distinction between the Jewish law, and the law of faith, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he addresses them in the following impressive terms: “O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ* hath been evidently set forth, crucified for you? This only would I learn of you; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” Gal. 3. 1. 2. The gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon those who believed in Jesus Christ, after he was glorified, (John 7. 39.) and after they believed, as before observed; and it is to the fact of those gifts having been thus received that Paul refers the Galatian church, in order to correct the errors which the Judaizing teachers had led its members into.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul, after describing the grace of God, as manifested unto the Jewish nation, in the first twelve verses of the first chapter, concluding the twelfth verse in the following words, “*that we (Jews) should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in*

Christ", in the 13th verse observes, "in whom ye (Gentiles) also trusted, AFTER that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, AFTER *that ye believed ye were SEALED with the holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance.*" He tells them that he mentions them in his prayers, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, *may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him, the EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED*, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and sat him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*"

This extract from the Epistle to the Ephesians, affords a very striking representation of the gifts of the Spirit after belief. Paul went to Ephesus, and found there twelve of John's disciples, and "said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost *since ye believed?* And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's Baptism. Then, said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance; saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Jesus Christ. WHEN THEY HEARD THIS they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, AND THEY SPAKE WITH OTHER TONGUES, AND PROPHECIED.*" Acts 19. 1. 6. This was the Spirit with which they were sealed (Eph. 1. 13.) *after* they heard the word of truth, and *after* that they believed. And this was the same Spirit of *wisdom, and revelation*, whom Paul prayed God might give unto them (the Ephesians) that they might know what is the hope of his calling, &c. and (said he) what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward *who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.*

Eph. 1. 17. 20. This is the same Spirit whom Christ said unto his disciples "shall testify of me, and ye (the twelve who had been with him from the beginning) also shall bear witness." John 15. 26. 27. In precise correspondence with this, and according to the sealing above mentioned, together with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation which Paul prayed the Ephesians might have; Peter said unto the Jews who had commanded the Apostles to teach no more in the name of Jesus Christ, "we ought to obey God rather than man. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM.*" Acts 5. 29. 32. This was the same Spirit who fell on Cornelius, and friends, after they believed, as it did on the one hundred and twenty disciples (composed of Jewish proselytes) at the beginning. Acts 1. 15—2. 2—4. 11. 15—16. The Ephesians are commanded to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are SEALED unto the day of redemption." 4. 30. The circumstances attending Paul's ministry at Ephesus are very remarkable, as described in the Acts of the Apostles; and tend, with great force, to shew the necessity of miracles in the establishment of churches in the beginning of the Gospel dispensation. The history of Luke, relative to the miraculous circumstances, is in the following words: Paul, after baptizing John's disciples, went into the Synagogue, and spake boldly of the things concerning the kingdom of God. He was then compelled to teach in the school of Tyrannus on account of the oppositson he met with in the Synagogue—"And this continued for the space of two years; so that *all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.* And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then some of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the

Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. The seven sons of Sceva did so. And the evil spirit answered, and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house, naked, and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews, and Greeks also, dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, &c. &c. so greatly grew the word of God, and prevailed. Acts 19. 3—20. By these means the Ephesians were converted to christianity; to the truth of which, the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, and the divine power with which Paul was endowed, even the evil spirit bore witness. Those Ephesian converts, and them upon whom he laid his hands after baptizing them, Acts 19. 6. and who received the Spirit, were they unto whom Paul wrote his Epistle, called his Epistle to the Ephesians; in which he tells them, “ye trusted in Christ, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise.” Chapt. 1. 13. With an eye to the means before mentioned from the Acts, he tells them, in the beginning of the 2nd chapter of his Epistle, “And you hath he (God) quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world; according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” having a reference, probably, to the satanical influence mentioned in Acts 19. 13—16.

Ephesus was the very throne of idolatry; the worship of idols being performed in no part of the heathen world with greater splendour than at that city, on account of the famous temple of Diana, which was built at the expense of all *Asia*; and in which was an image of that Goddess, said to have fallen down from Jupiter. Acts 19. 35.

The holy spirit of promise, by which believers were sealed, and thereby enabled to speak with new tongues, to discern spirits, &c. is called the earnest of the believer's inheritance. *Earnest* is a small part of the price of a thing, given as an evidence that the bargain is concluded, and as a

pledge that the whole covenant will be executed at the time agreed. The gifts of the Spirit were an earnest that our bodies shall be raised from the dead, as Jesus Christ's was, and a proof of his being exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour; &c. and were designed to aid in establishing the Gospel in its first promulgation after the ascension of Jesus Christ. Agreeable to these ideas, Paul tells the Galatians, according to Macknight's translation, and commentary, *Because ye are sons, (that is, ye believing Jews, and Gentiles,) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, by whose gifts, being assured that ye are God's sons, ye can address him in prayer with confidence, calling him, each in your own language, Abba, Father. Gal. 4. 6.* This is the same Spirit which they had received by the hearing of faith, by which their acceptance with God was sealed. Gal. 3. 2. As Christ himself was declared to be the Son of God, by the descent of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, so the spiritual gifts, called *the Spirit* or *the Holy Ghost*, Acts 10. 44. bestowed in the Apostolic day on believers at their baptism, demonstrated them to be the sons or people of God, and heirs of the promises. Gal. 4. 5—6. Hence the Spirit, from whom these gifts proceeded, is called the Spirit of adoption. Rom. 8. 15. Hence, also, the Jewish believers, when they heard of the descent of the Holy Ghost on Cornelius, and his company, immediately concluded that God had granted unto them eternal life, although uncircumcised. Agreeably to the same import of those gifts of the Spirit, Paul addresses the Romans in the following manner, according to Macknight's translation, and commentary, 8, 15. 16.: *"That ye Romans are the sons of God appears from your dispositions—For ye have not received the spirit of slaves to serve God from fear; that disposition the law produces; but through the discovery of the mercy of God in the Gospel, ye have received the spirit of children, by which, in your prayers, you call him Father, each in your own language: also the Spirit itself, bestowed on us in his extraordinary operations, beareth witness along with the filial dispositions of our own minds, that we are the children of God."* It was in reference to the gifts of the Spirit in discerning of spirits, that John writes in his first Epistle, 2.

27;" "the *anointing* which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man should teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." None but those who had received the gift of discerning spirits, and were thereby enabled to distinguish between the true, and false teachers, or Anti-Christ, were meant by John in the above passage. The quakers profess to derive their authority for immediate revelations, &c. from this part of John's Epistle, and refer to 1. Corinth. 12. 10. as additional proof of the same illumination. This pretension, however, neither in the quakers, shakers, or any other denomination, can be regarded as true, until they exhibit the proofs which those persons, possessed of them in the Apostolic day, were, by the Holy Ghost, enabled to do, by sensible miracles. Until they can do this, they ought to be contented to learn what the Spirit has revealed, out of his word; and to suspect their supposed revelations, as consisting in nothing more than the delusions of passion, and imagination.

All the diversified gifts of the Spirit in the Apostolic day, by which their possessors were enabled to work miracles; to prophecy; to discern Spirits; to speak in divers kinds of tongues; and to interpretate tongues; &c. were the promise of the Father, which Christ told the disciples they should receive, who believed on him after he was glorified. His language is, "He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he, *of the Spirit, which* THEY THAT BELIEVE ON HIM SHOULD RECEIVE; *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."* John 7. 38. 39. After he was crucified, and had risen, and before he ascended, he commissioned his disciples to go, and preach the Gospel to every creature, telling them that "he that believeth, (by their preaching) and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, &c. Mark 16. 15—18. And they went forth, and *preached every where*, the Lord

working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. v. 20. The gifts of the Spirit were called, when received, *the sealing of the Spirit; the earnest of the Spirit; the unction of the Holy Ghost, &c.* by which the truths of the Gospel, and their divine authority; and the right, and power of the Apostles to establish, teach, and govern the churches, were demonstrated; and by which they who received him were taught by immediate revelation, and declared the sons of God. Although the sealings, earnest, and anointings of the Spirit, which were realized, as above explained, in the Apostolic day, have long since ceased; yet, they were written, that we may believe the same truths, for the establishment, and progress of which they were originally bestowed. The only certain, and scriptural evidence that persons can have of acceptance with God in our day, is in repentance towards him, required by the word of God; faith in Jesus Christ, produced by the teachings, and testimony of the Spirit in the scripture; and a life of new obedience, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit, described in Gal. 5. 22—24. their conscience also bearing witness, enlightened, and regulated by the word of God; which is the mean, since immediate revelation ceased, of the Spirit's communications to the heart, as it is *through* faith, *by* the word, that man as an intelligent moral being, holds converse with God.

It may not be amiss here to introduce the judgment of the great Biblical Critic, and Lexicographer, Parkhurst; relative to the use of the term "*Charis, or grace,*" in the operations of the Spirit, in the writings of the Apostles. The judgment of this great man is, in opposition to a pre-conceived opinion, which he had formed; and which is a predominant one in the systems of many modern divines; it seems to have been produced by a *particular* examination of the use of the term. "*Charis, or grace, (he observes) denotes the gracious and unmerited assistance of the Holy Spirit in his miraculous gifts. But though I firmly believe his blessed operations or influences on the hearts of ordinary believers in general;*" (by *immediate* operations, and agencies, I suppose,) "*yet, that charis or grace is ever in the New Testament used particularly for these, is more than I dare,*

after attentive examination, assert." These miraculous operations have ceased, because the necessity of them has ceased; but the ideas, and knowledge which the revelations, and miracles of the Spirit recorded, impart to the mind; and the religious exercises to which they lead, and the dispositions of heart which they produce by their proper use, are not less divine, supernatural, and gracious, than if they were the consequence of the immediate revelations, and physical operations of the Holy Spirit. This decision of Mr. Parkhurst, after a careful examination, is agreeable to what I formerly remarked upon the distinction which divines make between the operations of the Spirit, his revelations, &c. as recorded; and those which they contend exist in our day, which they call *special*. That observation was, that "faith in Jesus Christ never has been produced, nor will it ever be, by any other than the miraculous operations, and supernatural revelations of the Spirit, which are recorded." The gracious, and unmerited assistance of the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous gifts, and operations, by which *we are enabled to believe*, are committed to record—that record contains the propositions to be learnt, and believed; and the evidence by which alone they can be believed: these are the means (and well suited for the purposes, to be sure they are,) which God has established for spiritual knowledge, and faith in Jesus Christ. The providences of God; and all the distresses, the pains, and sorrows, &c. which are incidental to humanity in its fallen state, which are the fruits, and wages of sin, are, under the means of Gospel instruction, indispensable auxiliaries in producing attention, teachableness, &c. Special operations, as distinguished from miraculous ones, have nothing to do in the business—they are of human device, and anti-scriptural. The true ones are all miraculous, and supernatural; and "are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The belief or rejection of the truth does not change it; or alter the terms in which it is offered; or the evidence by which it supports itself. God has given us no other revelations of his Spirit, than what are written; nor has he tendered any other evidence

by which he requires them to be believed, than what are of record. Paul said to the Galatians, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel than that which *we have preached* unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1. 8. That Gospel was established by miracles, as it was taught by the inspirations of the Spirit; they are both written for our instruction, and belief, aided in their efficiency, as above remarked, by God's providences, &c. Nothing appears to me more preposterous than to attach to the operations of God in the Gospel, a character which is derived solely from the conduct of men, in either hearing or forbearing; investigating, and believing; or neglecting, and rejecting it. Were it merely absurd, it would be less objectionable; it transposes the caprice, and inattention of man; and the rejection of the Gospel by him, to the account of God; it involves the impiety of charging God with withholding either the necessary means of grace, or his own agencies in order to faith, while he declares the contrary. The scriptural doctrine of the operations, and agencies of the Spirit, has been sufficiently developed in the preceding Sections; which contain an account of the operations of the Spirit in the Apostolic day, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; which were the fulfilment of Christ's promises respecting them. The particular account of the manner, and character of the operations of the Spirit, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, explains the correct meaning of what the Apostles wrote in their Epistles concerning them: all of which prove the absurdity of many of the opinions which at this time exist upon the subject, as to the manner, nature, and design of them. However strange it may appear to those who entertain these opinions, it is a demonstrable truth that they are the most effectual cause why the Gospel is neglected, and rejected by so many persons in christian countries, where the Gospel is preached. Were it not for this, I would not agitate the subject. I do not charge these errors against any particular denomination. They obtained in the church immediately after the miraculous operations ceased; and have continued ever since, in some form or other; and will, I suppose, continue, until the twelve hundred and sixty years close. They have been one

of the most efficient causes of that long period of darkness, and declension; (I mean the misconceived notions concerning them) of disunion, and distraction; of ignorance, and religious intolerance. They have produced the contempt, and neglect of the scriptures amongst men; in the place of which have been substituted the theories, and capricious whims of fancy, and imagination, exercised upon the emotions, and passions, excited by impassioned declamation. These are bolstered up by a PECULIAR PHYSICAL *theory of human depravity*—by which the *real* intellectual, and moral character of man, have been destroyed, and not a single feature or analogy of a *gracious, MORAL government*, have been left in their place. These errors have dislocated the plan, design, and order of God's operations; and changed the divine œconomy; or, at least so far as to make the revelations, and operations of God's Spirit recorded, not the means, *properly speaking*, of spiritual instruction, and faith, but the *rule* or plan by which the Spirit operates, by immediate physical agencies, in a secret, mystic way, upon individuals; a plan of operations, (*in order to faith*) about which Christ, and the Apostles, have not said a word.

These are the convictions of my own mind, after a careful examination of the subject; for the truth, and correctness of which, I refer exclusively to the predictions of the prophets; to Christ's promises; and to their literal fulfilment, as declared, and explained by the Apostles, in the Acts, in reference to the operations of the Spirit. For the same purpose, I refer also to the acknowledgement of every person of a *sound mind*, and the experience of all ages, that, in order to learn, and believe the truths of the Gospel, they must be communicated in a *known language*, and in *intelligible words*, BY HEARING—as Paul says.

How merciful, and gracious is God, in his love, and condescension! How low he has stooped to reach the condition, and capacity of man in his death of sin, and ignorance, that he might redeem, and elevate him to the mansions of ineffable bliss, and immortality! How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed by them that heard him; God bearing them witness both with signs,

and wonders, and with diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will; and which are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and believing that we may have life through his name! Let no man separate the faith of the Gospel from the evidence by which it is produced, which God hath joined together; this is the *order* of Sovereign wisdom, mercy, goodness, and truth; suited for, and accommodated to, the condition, and capacity of man!

Section 6.

The principles contained in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus examined; and their supposed incompatibility with the ideas in the preceding Sections removed; and their consistency evinced. The sin against the Holy Ghost considered, &c.

Truth is harmonious when understood. The truths of christianity, and the principles of the Gospel, are not less distinctly marked by this character, than are those of any other science. Nor is their appeal to the *common sense*, and *right reason* of mankind, less solid. It is true that the propositions of which christianity is composed, are supernatural; and, until communicated to the mind by *revealed instruction*, are as necessarily beyond the compass of its thoughts, as are the existence and principles of light, beyond the invention, or discovery of a blind man's mind, by its unaided operations. But when communicated, the truths of christianity are susceptible of correct apprehension by the mind, and of being believed by the understanding, by the evidence with which they support themselves, as are any other truths. They are not less dependant upon the *right use of reason*, or the exercise of the rational powers of the mind, *after being submitted to it*, for their proper application to practical, and moral purposes, than are any other moral principles, derived from social stipulation, or human institution. Nothing is more untrue than the opinion, that a man, in order to become a religious creature,

according to the principles of spiritual wisdom, and the true genius of christianity, must part with his understanding, or become *literally* a fool—it is by his understanding that he is capable of religion. Although, in the exercise of his mental powers, in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge from the word of God, and in the application of it to the obedience of faith, man is dependant upon the grace, and goodness of God; yet that grace, and goodness, are no more employed in superseding the necessity of rightly using the powers of the mind, in order to obtain the blessings offered in the Gospel, than the government of God over the fields of nature, the seed that grows, and the mind, and body of the husbandman, supersedes the necessity of labour, in filling his barn, or his store house with food, the product of the earth.

The principles contained in the third chapter of John's history of Jesus Christ, have been uniformly resorted to, to prove an agency of the Spirit of a *physical* nature, exerted *immediately* upon the minds or bodies of men, or upon both, in changing their essence, or texture, as *pre-requisite* to the faith of the Gospel, under its regular administrations. The principles of divine truth contained in that chapter, have as little to do with these notions of agencies, as the *immediate*, and *present* resurrection of the dead has in the belief of a future resurrection.

I have seen no exposition of the third chapter of John, but what covered it in entire obscurity, and in the end pressed it into the service of mystecism. I think it will be found upon a fair examination of the passages in that chapter which are relied on for these agencies, that the true ideas contained in it are perfectly consistent with, and are of the same meaning of Paul's expression, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," *literally* speaking. In this part of the Gospel history, we shall also find exemplified what I have so often repeated, viz. that the evidence by which the belief of God's word is effected, consists in miracles. I wish the reader to attend carefully to the phraseology of the verses in this chapter of John, and the parallel passages which I shall adduce to illustrate them. This history stands thus—"There was a

man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, *Rabbi*, WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD: FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM." Having demonstrated his character, as a teacher come from God, by supernatural, and divine evidences, consisting in the MIRACLES *he wrought*, the divine Saviour proceeds to TEACH Nicodemus; for "Jesus answered, and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, *he cannot see the kingdom of heaven;*" or, as Campbell on the Gospels translates it, he cannot perceive or discern (by the bodily organ, and the natural light,) the reign of God. "Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of WATER, and the SPIRIT, *he cannot ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit; MARVEL not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and THOU HEAREST THE SOUND THEREOF, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT.*" That is, they *hear the sound of the Spirit, or rather his words*—and hearing, they believe on the name of Jesus Christ, of whom the Spirit speaks, and testifies. "Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, how can these things be? Jesus answered, and said unto him, art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not; how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven."

For the purpose of explanation, I will here introduce some of the remarks of *Campbell on the Gospels*, on a part of the above quotation. He observes, "Nicodemus had acquainted our Lord what, in brief, his faith was concern-

ing him, and the foundation on which it was built. His faith was, that Jesus was a teacher whom God had specially commissioned: in other words, a prophet; and his reason for thinking so, was the miracles which he had performed. This we may rest assured, from what he says, when evidently disposed to say the most he could, was the sum of his belief at that time concerning Jesus." It was enough, too, to qualify him for receiving instruction upon divine, and spiritual subjects, when *explained, and accommodated to his capacity*. "No mention is made of the Messiah, or of his reign upon earth. It is in reference to this defect, in the words of Nicodemus, partly, as it were, to account for this silence on this article, and partly to point out to him *the proper source of this knowledge*, that our Lord answers, by observing, that, *unless a man be enlightened by the Spirit,*" (by the words of the Spirit) "or born anew, not to the light of this world, but to that of the heavenly, he cannot *discern* either the signs of the Messiah, or the nature of his government," (that is, he must be emerged from the womb of time, and sense, into the light of the glorious Gospel, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, which is the mean of spiritual vision). "For, let it be observed, that Nicodemus, though more candid than any Jew of his rank at that time, and willing to weigh, impartially, the evidence of a divine mission, even in one who was detested by the ruling powers; was not altogether superior to those prejudices concerning the *secular kingdom* of the Messiah, which seem to have been universal at that age. It is a very fine, and, at the same time, a just observation of Cyril, that our Lord's reprehensions, in this conversation, in some respects more severe than ordinary, are to be understood as directed, not so much against Nicodemus, as against the guides, and instructors of the age, the class to which Nicodemus belonged. Augustine is of opinion, that it was necessary *thus to humble the spiritual pride of the Pharisee*, the conceited superiority to the vulgar in things sacred, which is the greatest obstruction to divine knowledge; that he might be *prepared for receiving with humility* the illumination of the Spirit." Christ having, by his observations upon, and replies to, what Nicodemus said, non-plused, and confound-

ed all his pre-conceived notions, so as to *make him MARVEL*; and having, in a very clear, and plain manner, explained the fact by a lucid, and particular description, which Nicodemus admitted, as proven by the miracles which he wrought, viz. that he was a teacher come from God, he proceeded, under the authority of his divine credentials, to instruct him, in the true character which he sustained. His observations to Nicodemus are, (**BEING A TEACHER COME FROM GOD**) that "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses" (here he discloses his priestly character, by his teaching) "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world THROUGH HIM might be saved.*" The *new birth* contained in the expression, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," is of the same meaning with *faith in Jesus Christ*. Seeing the *kingdom of God* consists in the perception of the mind, (not by corporeal light, but by the light of God's word,) of the kingdom or reign of grace through the Redeemer. By the word believed the mind sees things which are not seen. This is the vision of faith. Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. 1 John 5. 1. How is this belief to be effected? By the teachings of God's Spirit, and the evidence of miracles; every word that Christ spoke was the word of God. Deut. 18. 18. John 17. 8. 14.; and every miracle he wrought was by the Holy Ghost. "If I bear witness of myself," (said our Lord) "my witness is not true. John 5. 31. I receive not testimony from man. *ibid* 34. I have a greater witness than that of John: for the **WORKS** which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself which hath sent me hath borne witness of me. *ibid* 36. 37. Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; be-

cause *I said, I am the Son of God?* If I do not the works of my Father believe me not—but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. John 10. 36—38. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. John 15. 22. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin. *ibid* 24. That ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick man of the palsey) I say unto thee, arise and take up thy couch and go unto thine house. And immediately he rose up before them and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day. Luke 5. 24—26. Jesus answered them and said, (they who had, with the rest of the five thousand, eaten of the five loaves, and two fishes, and were filled,) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the **MIRACLES**,” (not by reason of my divine credentials) “but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed. Then, said they, what shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said, This is the work of God that ye believe (by the miracles which he wrought) on him whom he hath sent. John 6. 26—29. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. *ibid* 35.”

So far from the miracles which Christ wrought not being the *exclusive* evidence by which his words are to be believed, and his character rightly apprehended, **THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST** consists in rejecting the truth supported by such testimony. So true is the declaration of the Spirit of God by John, that “many other **SIGNS** truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but **THESE ARE WRITTEN**, (all those which he had enumerated) *that ye MIGHT BELIEVE that*

Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that BELIEVING ye MIGHT have life through his name." John 20. 30—31.

As a proof that the rejection of the miracles which Christ wrought for the establishment of his divine character, and the belief that he is the Son of God, is the sin against the Holy Ghost; I adduce his own exposition of that sin, and hope that my reader will, with a solemnity, and impartiality of mind which become a subject of so awful a nature, attend to it—"And the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." (Matthew, in relating the same circumstance, says that there was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him in so much that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. Matth. 12. 22.) "And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?" After having, by a most forcible, plain, and unanswerable course of reasoning, demonstrated the impossibility of his having cast out devils by the prince of devils; and having observed, as recorded by Matthew, "but if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you," Matth. 12. 28, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; BECAUSE THEY SAID HE HATH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT." Mark 3. 22—30.

It matters not by what means the evidence by which Jesus Christ claims the belief in the minds of men, that he is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, is rejected, or despised; whether by the miracles he wrought being attributed to Beelzebub, or excluded as having been either not designed for, or incompetent to, produce the belief of his proper divine character when explained by the words of the Spirit, the consequence is the same—it is the sin against the Holy Ghost; and if not repented of, and the Saviour received as he is offered in the written Gospel, must doom the soul to hell. It was by the Spirit of God that Jesus Christ wrought all his miracles; and these, when explained

in the words of the Spirit, who only knoweth the things of God, and by that explanation applied to prove his divine character, is the evidence which the Holy Ghost hath given that he is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. This evidence is still the same, and is intended to impart the same knowledge, and to produce the belief of the same truth; for, as I have so often repeated, "these signs (said John) are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," &c.

To draw the attention of the candid reader, in a very particular manner, and to excite to serious reflection, the minds of some whom I much love for their sincerity, and apparent conscientiousness in the cause of Jesus Christ, but who, I am assured, are wrong in their opinions, and explanations of the word of God; I would, with an ardent importunity, and a palpitating concern for the prosperity of the Gospel, and the interests which immortal souls have in the belief of it, ask, By what means any sect, or denomination of christians, can reconcile it to themselves to exclude devout, and orderly members from their church, and communion, for professing to believe in the divine Saviour by those evidences which he gave, during his personal ministry upon earth by the Holy Ghost, which are the only proof he ever urged or relied upon for the faith of any person—and which, being rejected as incompetent or incredible, constituted the sin against the Holy Ghost? the same evidence, too, which the Holy Spirit of Truth has expressly informed us in his record, is written, that we MIGHT believe, and that believing we might have life through the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! which is the only FORM of evidence, too, by which faith can be produced (genuine faith, I mean,) since miracles ceased, formed, and circumstanced as the human mind is, with respect to spiritual, invisible, and divine things. If the Gospel ever has been infested with an error, which, on account of its magnitude, stands pre-eminently distinguished from all others, since the days of the Apostles, this is that error! It has wounded the Saviour in the house of his friends; it crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to open shame. It made its way into the church by the teachers of christianity, substituting for the

miraculous operations of the Spirit, and his inspirations, and revelations by words, which are written, SECRET operations, to supply their place. But to avoid the explosion of the scriptures entirely, (which, by the by, they cannot do, and act consistently,) they have made the word of God a mechanical tool, and the Spirit, in his secret operations, the hand which works with it upon the mind. The word of God, by this *mechanical transformation*, is so changed, as no longer to be the medium of spiritual intelligence, or the instrument of thought upon invisible, and divine things; notwithstanding the mind, in *reality*, can no more *think* than *speak* upon those subjects, without words. Words are as necessarily prior to both thought, and speech upon spiritual things, (being the stipulated signs of ideas, and the means of communicating them,) as causes are to their effects. The mind cannot think upon nothing; and without words on divine subjects, there are no ideas in the mind, and, of course, there can be no spiritual objects of thought in the view of the mind. The word of God, in the Gospel, came from him, through Jesus Christ; it is the mean of intelligence, of thought, reason, knowledge, and faith, in the human mind, upon those divine subjects, about which it is conversant; as it is the rule of conduct in the christian life—not of the nature of a mechanical instrument.

The misconceptions, relative to the mechanical use of the word of God in the secret operations, when united with the ideas of the regular succession of spiritual gifts by the imposition of hands, &c. from the Apostles, which is inseparably connected with it, is the foundation of Popery; as they form the essence of its infallibility. The scriptures were, in consequence of these errors, literally excluded from the *hands* of the common people by Popery; as they are from their *heads*, and *hearts*, by other denominations, through the subversion of their suitableness for imparting spiritual knowledge, and producing the faith of the Gospel by the evidence which they contain. Erroneous theories, and doctrines, are necessarily productive of injurious practical results, and in nothing more manifest than in the christian religion.

I leave it with reflecting minds to say, which are unagitated by passion; and unblinded by prejudice, by party spirit, or the pride of opinion; and which can appreciate the necessity of correct, consistent, and intelligible evidence, in order to a rational, and a firm faith, How far denominations of religion conduce to the contempt of the christian interest, and the degradation, and reproach of Christ, and his cause amongst mankind, who reprobate the suitableness, and sufficiency, the competency, and credibility, of the divine evidence given by the Holy Spirit; and which are recorded in the scriptures as the mean established by God under his government of grace for producing the faith of the Gospel?

To those who oppose the evidence of the Spirit, as recorded, and as the established, and competent mean of faith, I would use the language of expostulation, a little varied, which Gamaliel used with the high priests, and others, upon a similar occasion—I say unto you, refrain from opposing this doctrine, and let it alone, for if this council, or this work, and *form of evidence*, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, and *established by him as the order of his throne*, ye cannot overthrow it; LEST HAPLY YE BE FOUND EVEN TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD. Acts 5—38—39.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, chapt. 1. 8. reprobates every other plan of doctrine than that which the Apostles had taught, and which I have, at great length, detailed from the Acts of the Apostles, in some of the preceding Sections of this Chapter; his words are these: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” The preachers, and teachers in our day, cannot work miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, as did the Apostles, to prove the divine character of the Saviour, his resurrection, his supreme authority, &c. to make the Gentiles obedient in word, and deed; but they can employ the *same* signs, and wonders, and miracles, which *were* wrought, and *are* written for these purposes; so that the faith of their hearers should not stand in the wisdom of men, or their noisy declamation, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and power of God. The systematic neglect of, and of-

ten violent opposition to, preaching of this kind, has been equalled by nothing of a like nature more strikingly, than the oversight in the christian world, of the means which are necessary for the conversion of the Jews to christianity, viz. *the sending of the Gospel to them in their own language*. This has never been thought of until within a very few years; and all Christendom is lost in astonishment, that it should have been overlooked—See Buchanan's Asiatic Researches. This great oversight in respect to the means which are necessary for the conversion of the Jews, has arisen from the same cause, that the neglect in urging the evidences of the Spirit in signs, and wonders, as recorded in a proper manner, as the proofs by which the doctrines, and principles of the Gospel, can only be believed, has proceeded from. Divine, and supernatural things, are with greater difficulty believed, even with evidence, than natural ones are, because of their *absence*, or their want of *immediate sensible properties*; and on account of their contrariety to natural objects. Without the evidence which God, by his Spirit, has given of their truth; and by which they support themselves, they cannot, consistently, and agreeably to the very nature of the human mind, and the analogies of truth, reason, and common sense, be believed. This source of error has consisted, and does consist, in the opinion that the Spirit of God, by an immediate physical agency, of a *Lazarus raising like operation*, either upon the *essence of mind*, or *the organic structure of the body*, or both, regenerates the soul; and thereby imparts to, or produces in it a capacity for *second sight*; which is a pre-requisite work to spiritual discernment, and faith: and that preaching, and hearing the word of God, is nothing more than a simultaneous operation, the Spirit sometimes *working with*, and often *without* the word. This doctrine has been proped by a resort to God's sovereignty, his decrees, &c. Had those system makers have shown a way by which the souls of men could escape the burnings of tophet for believing their plan, and rejecting the Gospel; they would have extinguished the flames of a *Gospel hell*; having failed in that, however, their theories only crowd the gates of perdition by the souls of those who are lulled into a sceptical repose by the

impossibility of believing the Gospel according to their views. For the origin, in part, of these theories, see pages 100, 1—2, of this book. So long as such ideas of the operations of God's Spirit exist, the proper means, in their appropriate character, for imparting spiritual knowledge, and producing faith, must, of necessity, be overlooked, or neglected; and, when urged for these purposes, be opposed with a warmth, and intolerance, with unwarrantable charges of heresy, and inquisitorial denunciation, very unbecoming the meek, and lowly spirit of the Gospel—it cannot be otherwise; because passion, and imagination become the ruling principles of the mind: they dictate to the understanding, and consecrate every effusion of fancy, and delusive, transitory feeling, which are as changeable as the wind, with the name of the Spirit's own immediate operations. What heresies, distraction, and bloodshed, have afflicted the church, and people of God, from these causes!

Upon spiritual, and moral subjects, it is incalculable what evils arise from apparently trifling causes. A striking example of this, is found in the misapprehension of the expression of our Lord to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3. 8. The wind bloweth upon the face of nature; it being invisible, and only known by its effects, is thought to establish the physical operations of the Spirit in regeneration, in concomitance with, but distinct from, and independent of the word of God in the Gospel. This error has deprived the Gospel of its instrumental character, properly speaking, for the spiritual renovation of the understanding, will, and affections of men. The expression in the concluding part of the verse, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit," is rarely ever taken in connection with the preceding part of it—the hearing the sound of the wind. We hear the sound of the wind, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so also we hear the Spirit through the word—he is no more an object of corporeal vision, than is the wind; and it is by the sound of his voice in words that he is known to exist, and by which the knowledge of spiritual, and eternal things, is communica-

ted to the mind. The things of God are made known to the understandings of men by the words of God—those glorious things which the Gospel promises; among which, is the world to come, the pardon of sin, a glorious resurrection of the body from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost, procured, and illustrated by the death, and resurrection of the Son of God; a happy immortality, &c. upon condition of repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ. These things, believed by their proper evidence, constitute the new birth, as far as the term regeneration is applicable to man on this side of the grave. According to the *absolute* meaning of the term regeneration, I must needs think, that the glorious resurrection of the body from the dead, as Paul described it, is an essential part of it, which is *hereafter* to be realized. This being believed in through Jesus Christ as a fundamental article in the operations of God's Spirit, in the destiny of man, is a main principle in the intellectual, and moral regeneration of man in this life. The certainty of our future resurrection, and the truth, and authority of the Gospel, is resolvable into the divinity of Jesus Christ. Hence John says, that "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John 5. 1. And Paul says that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1. 4. And John, in another place, says that he wrought the miracles (by the Holy Ghost) that he might be believed the Son of God. God, in raising up Jesus Christ from the dead, is said thereby to have begotten him. Acts 13. 33. We are said, by the abundant mercy of God, to be *begotten again* unto a hope of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Pet. 1. 3. All of which prove, that it is by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and the word of his Spirit, that life, and immortality are procured, and brought to light; as it is through the same medium, and by the same means, that God is revealed to man; for the scriptures saith, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" but, says Paul, "how then 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?" (or some person to

instruct them by the word of God) “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. 10. 13—17. But, the Holy Ghost saith by Paul, there must be a distinction in the sound; the operations of the Spirit consisting in mere sound, like the wind blowing, or in an unknown tongue, can effect nothing towards regeneration; “for except ye utter by the tongue *words easy* to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the *meaning* of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me,” &c. “If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or *unbelievers*, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, or *teach intelligibly*, and there come in one that believeth not or one unlearned, he is convinced of all (by the Spirit who speaks through them) he is judged of all; and thus are the the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God,” (in the exercise, and by reason of the faith thus produced,) “and report that God is in you of a truth. 1 Corinth. 14. 9—25. He that cometh to God must *believe* that he is; this belief cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As a solemn confirmation of the soundness, and truth of this doctrine Paul tells the Corinthians, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord—But if any man be ignorant let him be ignorant.” 1 Corth. 14. 37—38—It is by the words of the Spirit of God through the Apostles, that we are taught the things of God, which man’s wisdom teacheth not, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth explaining spiritual things in spiritual words—But the natural man receiveth not the things of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, (as a natural man) because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinth. 2. 13. 14. The natural man discerneth things through, natural, and corporeal light, by the bodily organs; the spiritual man discerns the things of the Spirit through the

words which the Holy Ghost hath taught, by the eye of the mind; and thus he looks at things not seen which are eternal, while the things which are seen, by corporeal light are temporal—It was on this account that Christ told Nicodemus that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; for, said he in another place, where he was asked the question of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come? “the kingdom of God (said he) cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo! here; or lo! there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke. 17. 20—21. “The righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this wise, Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above;) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring Christ again from the dead) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10. 6—9.

Nicodemus, it appears, was himself converted by hearing the sound of the Spirit of God, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ; for every word that he spoke was the word of God. Nicodemus was taught of the Spirit that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whosoever, believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life; this he believed by the right evidence, the testimony of the Holy Ghost; for said he to the Saviour, WE KNOW that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him. The reasons for my believing that Nicodemus was born again, and actually *discerned* the kingdom, or reign of God by the instruction of Jesus Christ in that conversation, are found in his conduct and observations afterwards: “The chief Priests, and Phairsees said unto the officers, whom they sent to bring Jesus unto them, why have ye not brought him? They answered unto them, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, are ye also deceived,? &c. Nicodemus saith unto them, (*the same that come to Jesus*

by night being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man before it *HEAR him and know what he doeth?* They answered, and said unto him *art thou also of Galilee?* Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet, And every man went unto his own house." John 7. 44—53. The conduct of Nicodemus after Christ was crucified, evinces a divine change of heart: "And there came also Nicodemus," (with Joseph of Arimathea) "(which at the first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about an hundred pound weight; and after they had embalmed his body they buried it in a garden where he was crucified." John 19. 38—41. This conduct of Nicodemus strongly indicates a divine influence upon his heart by the instructions of the Saviour, which were established in his mind, and heart, by the miracles he wrought. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." If the woman wrought a good work when she anointed the body of Jesus Christ for the burying, and manifested her devotion to him; Nicodemus' conduct, after his death, was no less expressive of his love to, and veneration for him. Nicodemus was renewed by knowledge after the image of him who created him. Colos. 3. 10; for he learnt Christ, having heard him, and being taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, and was thereby renewed in the Spirit or disposition of his mind. Eph. 4. 20—23. And this was preparatory to the physical regeneration of the body, or its resurrection from the dead by the physical operations, and power of the Holy Ghost.

Section 7.

The same subject continued.—The connexion between Baptism, Faith, and Regeneration, considered; and the use of Baptism, as an ordinance, in the Christian Church

The design of the mediatorial government of Jesus Christ, or of the Gospel dispensation, is to restore that which was lost by the fall of man, or by his apostacy from God. Before

man rebelled, he enjoyed union, and communion with God; and was the subject of his beatific smiles. By the fall he lost that communion, and with it the knowledge of God, and became liable to his wrath, and curse. A mediator was appointed, whose body was prepared, and consecrated a sacrifice for sin. Heb. 10. 8—10; he was also to restore the knowledge of, and immediate union with God, which were lost. Matth. 11. 27. “Therefore, (as the Apostle says, according to the translation, and commentary of Macknight,) *if any one be in Christ or united to him by faith, he is a new creature: old things, his former vicious inclinations, bad practices, and corrupt principles, have passed away. Behold all things have become new! But all these new things are the work of God, who hath reconciled us Jews, and Gentiles to himself through Jesus Christ; and hath committed to us Apostles the ministry of the Gospel, whereby, this happy reconciliation is produced, which consists in preaching that God is by Christ BRINGING BACK the world to himself, promising not to punish them for their trespasses; but to pardon them upon their faith and repentance. And by inspiration hath put into us Apostles the doctrine of reconciliation. In Christ’s stead therefore, who is God’s chief ambassador, we execute the office of subordinate ambassadors. And seeing God beseeches by us, we pray in Christ’s stead; saying to all men, Be ye reconciled to God: lay aside your enmity, and accept the pardon he offers you by us. For this strongest of all reasons, That him, even Christ who knew no sin, God hath made a sin-offering for us, that we might be righteous in the sight of God, through the merits of his death, and the influences of his Spirit*” through the Gospel. 2 Corinth. 5. 17—21. In consequence of the death of Jesus Christ, man, since the fall, has been put upon a *gracious* state of probation; it will not end until this administration closes; nor will the COMPLETE *bringing back*, or restoration of man to his God, be effected until the glorious resurrection of the body from the dead; a pre-requisite to which, is faith in Jesus Christ. The church militant is a shadow or faint representation of the church triumphant, or the heavenly kingdom beyond the grave. The kingdom of God on this side of the grave

may be seen or discerned through the revelations of God's Spirit, believed; we, however, see spiritual things through a glass darkly or obscurely: but, in the life to come, we shall see them face to face, clearly. 1 Corinth. 13. 12. The seeing spiritual things while in this life obscurely, as through a glass; and the clear perception which will be realized in the life to come, as mentioned by Paul, seem to be the *consequence* of the relative situation of the human mind, and body, in regard to spiritual things, as spoken of in the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus. He told him that "Except a man be born again he cannot **SEE** *the kingdom of God*," John 3. 3. or discern the reign of grace, because it is spiritually discerned; the natural man cannot see this; it is not perceived through corporeal light by the bodily organ, but through the light of *the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ*, by the eye of the mind; 2 Corinth. 4—6. by which we are *transformed* by the *renewing* of the mind. Rom. 12—2. He also told him, that except a man be born of **WATER**, and of the **SPIRIT**, he cannot **ENTER INTO** *the kingdom of God*;" observing, at the same time, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." John 3. 5—6. The new birth, as far as it is a pre-requisite to the seeing or discerning the kingdom of God, in this life, is effected by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in, and by which that kingdom is established; and through which the connexion between the kingdom of God upon earth, and his glorious kingdom beyond the grave, in heaven, is perceived; as well as the relation which the subjects of the Gospel reign, bear (who receive Christ as he is offered) to the kingdom of glory, and immortality. In reference to it, and to aid the views, and exercises of faith by sense, the ordinances of the Gospel, Baptism, the Supper, the Sabbath, &c. were established. The regeneration, in its *absolute* sense, which is necessary to our *entering into* the kingdom of heaven, is effected by the power of the Holy Ghost in the resurrection from the dead. This fundamental article is embraced by the faith of the Gospel, and is an important, and efficient principle in producing that change of heart, or holiness, without which no man shall see God. The truth,

certainly, and authority of the Gospel, in this respect, rests wholly upon the divinity of Jesus Christ in his mediatorial character as the Prince of Peace. His resurrection from the dead with a glorious body, is a sure pledge of the glorious resurrection of those who believe in him, and live the life of faith upon him; because such is his promise. When *thus born of the Spirit in its full sense we shall be Spirit*; for this natural body shall be raised a spiritual body; and thus qualified by the immediate physical operation of the Spirit, we shall enter into the kingdom of God in the eternal world, of which baptism, as a door of entrance into the church below, is a sign.

I wish to be a little explicit upon this subject, that I may be intelligible. I have observed that regeneration by the Spirit, in a full, and absolute sense, implies a renovation of the physical and bodily nature, as well as the intellectual, and moral powers of man. The two latter are effected by the Gospel of Jesus Christ believed, and acted upon as the rule of life: hence Paul says, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2. 20. I also observed, that the *prospect* of the resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ, (which is the only foundation of such a hope) is an efficient principle in producing the newness of life in this state of trial: hence Peter's expression upon the subject, according to Macknight's translation, "Blessed BE the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who according to his great mercy, hath begotten us again to a living hope, (or the hope of a new life) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading, procured in the heavens for us, who by the power of God are guarded, or kept THROUGH FAITH to the salvation prepared to BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME; the time of Christ's second coming.* 1 Pet. 1. 3—5. We are saved by hope, said Paul: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. 8. 24. The thing hoped for is the redemption of our bodies. *ibid* 23. The thing hoped for, viz. the redemption of our bodies from the dead,

we are authorised to expect upon the promise of him that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, who cannot deny himself. He has promised to quicken the mortal bodies of those who believe on the Son of God, by his Spirit; of which baptism is an emblem. Hence, Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians, 2. 10—12. observes, according to Macknight's translation, and commentary, "Ye are made complete in every thing necessary to your salvation by him who is the head of all government and power: by whom also ye have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh; even by the circumcision of Christ. This appears from your being BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM as persons whose old man hath been crucified with him: *in which baptism also*, that it might be a complete emblem of your circumcision, YE HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH HIM out of the water, as persons made spiritually alive, THROUGH YOUR BELIEF OF THE STRONG WORKING OF GOD WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."

For the purpose of a more explicit, and satisfactory view of Paul's meaning in Colos. 2. 12. I will subjoin Macknight's two notes upon the use of baptism, and its connexion with faith as expressed in this verse, produced by the operations of God's Spirit in raising Jesus Christ from the dead, and the miraculous gifts, and operations which were bestowed, and employed in consequence of it. The profound erudition, and deep biblical learning, the impartiality, and love of truth, of this great man, entitle him to the highest regard. His remarks upon the expression "*Buried with him in Baptism,*" &c. are as follow: "Christ began his ministry with receiving baptism from John, to shew in an emblematical manner that he was to die, and to rise again from the dead. And after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to initiate mankind into his religion by baptizing them, as he had himself been baptized, to shew that although they shall die like him, through the malignity of sin, yet as certainly as he rose from the dead, believers shall be raised at the last day with bodies fashioned like his glorious body. Wherefore his disciples having been baptized, as he was, and for the very same purpose, they are

fitly said to be *buried* with him in baptism; and in baptism to be *raised* with him. Now since baptism is an emblem of our putting off this corrupt mortal body at death with its affections, and lusts, it is with great propriety called the christian circumcision: especially, as by shewing us what we shall be at the resurrection, it teaches us to put to death our members which are upon the earth.—Farther, since our baptismal vow together with the doctrine of Christ which at our baptism we profess, are more effectual principles of justification than the Jewish circumcision or the Pythagorean precepts concerning abstinence from animal food, we may justly be said to be made complete in respect of sanctification by the christian circumcision; which however is not performed all at once like the Jewish, but is accomplished gradually. For it is only begun in the present life by the operation of the word, and will be completed by the putting off of our corrupt mortal bodies at death, and by our obtaining glorious immortal bodies at the resurrection. Because this spiritual circumcision is to be completed by God's raising our bodies fashioned like his glorious body signified in baptism by the raising of the body out of the water, the Apostle, in this verse, to finish his description of the spiritual circumcision, adds, "being buried with him in baptism, in which also ye have been raised with him *through the belief*, or faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"; we are buried with him, and raised with him, through the faith of the operation of God, &c.

Upon the remaining part of the verse in his second note Macknight remarks, "The circumcision which Christ performs, being accomplished by the influence of the doctrines of the Gospel on the minds of the believers; and their belief of these doctrines being founded on their belief of the resurrection of Christ, their belief of that great miracle is justly represented as the means whereby they are raised out of the water of baptism new creatures, who, as the Apostle observes in the next verse, are like Christ to be raised at the last day to an eternal life in the body." Of the efficacy of the belief of the resurrection of Christ in confirming men's faith in the Gospel, Peter likewise hath spoken,

1 Peter, 1: 3, 23. Blessed be 'he God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope or to a hope of life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Macknight's note upon this verse stands thus—"Jesus having been put to death by the Jews for calling himself the Son of God, his resurrection was a declaration from God that he is his Son, and to shew this, God termed his raising him, *his begetting him*. Acts xiii. 33. Wherefore Jesus having promised to return, and raise the dead, his resurrection is both a proof and a pledge of our resurrection: on which account God is fitly said to have begotten us again to the hope of life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This resurrection is justly called the regeneration of the body, of which baptism is a fit emblem when administered by immersion. Hence Christ told Nicodemus, that except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; being born of water is baptism itself by water; which is emblematic of the resurrection by the Spirit, and power of God, of the body from the dead, and is expressive of the purity in which it shall be raised. Being begotten again to a hope of life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; we express, and manifest that hope by submitting to be buried as he was in baptism, and to be raised again out of the water, as he was by John. This baptism of the Saviour was afterwards explained as having been a prefiguration of his death, and resurrection by the Holy Ghost. Yielding to the same ordinance of baptism, we thereby express our belief that as Christ died by the imputation of sin, so we shall die by its malignity; and as he was raised again by the Holy Ghost with a glorious body, so we shall rise by virtue of the same power from the dead with bodies like his. Christ's baptism was not the baptism of repentance; for he never committed sin: but he submitted to be baptized, that is, buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again as an emblem of his future death, and resurrection. In like manner, the baptism of persons is emblematical of their own death, burial, and resurrection, as it is commemorative of Christ's. It was with a view to the resurrection of

the body, that Paul wrote to the Romans as follows: "even we ourselves waiting for the adoption, namely, the redemption of our body; for we are saved by hope; now hope which hath obtained its object, or is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth or possesses how also can he hope for it? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with patience for it. This is the hope which hath begotten us again, even that which is produced by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the promise that we shall rise as he did. Paul writes to Titus, "we are saved according to the mercy of God our Saviour through the washing or *bath* of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The renewing of the Holy Ghost here, has a reference to the purifying influence of the Gospel believed, and the resurrection from the dead. Macknight observes, "the gift of the Holy Ghost which, on some occasions, was shed on the believing Jews, and Gentiles, from heaven, and on others was imparted to them by the imposition of the Apostles hands, it is with great propriety called *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, because by that gift their belief of the divine original of the Gospel was greatly strengthened, so that the doctrines of the Gospel thus confirmed must have had a powerful influence in producing such a change in their dispositions as made them new creatures. Regeneration is further explained, 1 Peter 1. 23: "Having been regenerated or born again, not of corruptible seed, (not of flesh, and blood,) but incorruptible through the word of the living God, which remaineth forever." These words, said Peter, are they which we preach unto you; they are the same which Christ said are Spirit, and life. Macknight observes, "The incorruptible seed, through which believers are born again," (I would also say, by which they are made to believe,) "is not the bodily seed but the word of the living God, because they were given to Christ by God; and are said to be *incorruptible* because they are never to be altered. The corruptible seed which proceedeth from the human body, with the high birth which it conveys to those who are born from it, remaineth only during the present life, while the incorruptible seed, together with the new, and noble nature which it conveys to those who are born from it,

will remain through all eternity." The incorruptible seed, which is the word of God, can never produce spiritual discernment, nor inspire lively hope or the hope of life, unless it is received in the sense in which it was originally conceived, and revealed by the Holy Spirit; nor will it do to be taken in a disjointed form. It is not every verse of the word of God which is suited to produce this hope of life. The word says, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." The incorruptible seed which regenerates the soul is the word, said Peter, which by the *Gospel* is preached unto you. The word which by the *Gospel* was preached, and is preached, when preached aright, is that which teaches, and proves to us, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and a sure resting place for all who put their trust in him; who redeems, not by corruptible things, as silver, and gold, from vain conversation, received by tradition from the Fathers, but with his precious blood, as of a lamb, without blemish, and without spot, who was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for *us* who by him do believe in God that raised him from the dead, by which we are begotten unto a hope of life; and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. The word of God employed about these things, and used not only to communicate them to our minds, but also to assure us, that as God hath raised up the Lord, he will also raise up us by his own power, and which exhorts us to gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, which promises are yea and amen in Christ—this is the incorruptible seed by which we are regenerated or born again. And as it is established in heaven, and is as immutable as God himself, being expressive of his unchanging, and gracious will, purposes, and operations, all of which will be performed, and accomplished in due time, and, of course, furnish proper objects for faith, and hope—it endureth for ever.

As a farther proof that regeneration, in its literal meaning, embraces the resurrection of the dead, Christ, in Matthew, 19th, and 28th verse, in answer to this question of

Peter in the 27th, What shall we have for having forsaken all and followed thee? observed, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit in the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Christ had observed, in verse 23, that it is difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Campbell upon that passage observes, that, by the *kingdom of heaven*, is sometimes understood in this history, the christian church, then soon to be erected, and sometimes the state of the blessed in heaven after the resurrection; and, in regard to the above declaration of our Lord, that *both* states are understood. And, in his remarks on verse 28th, he observes, that what was said on verse 23, holds equally in regard to the promise we have here, relative to those who had followed him (Christ) in the regeneration. The principal completion will be at the general resurrection, when there will be, in the most important sense, a renovation (as he has interpreted it) or *regeneration* of the heavens, and the earth, when *all things* shall become new, embracing what Paul has said relative to the resurrection of the dead, 1^o Corinth. that "Flesh, and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of God—the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed—for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up of victory—the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law—but thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The scripture speaks consistently, when, in describing the state of the righteous after the resurrection, it represents them as having their mortal bodies re-fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; (by the Holy Ghost, as his was,) and that after their whole person is thus completed, they shall be carried to an heavenly country, where they shall live unspeakably happy to all eternity. By the belief of this, we are begotten again to a lively hope, or a hope of life, bottomed upon the fact, viz. the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

—through that fact we are thus begotten, and it is by the incorruptible seed, the word of God, that that fact is made known to us, and by that believed; and also that God through Jesus Christ giveth us the victory over death, the grave, and sin, and the curse of the law. But these things are no farther accomplished until the grave is swallowed up of victory, than by faith in their fulfilment, as promised, and as a consequence of the covenant in Jesus Christ: “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God—whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? We live by faith, and not by sight. The life” (said Paul) “that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me—this faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The heavenly country which was promised to Abraham, and to his spiritual seed, (those who believe in Jesus Christ) under the emblem of Canaan, and which is called, 2 Pet. 3. 13. a new heavens, and a new earth, is said to be *incorruptible*, because it shall neither be destroyed by the waters of a flood, nor by fire, as this earth hath been, and in the end will be. Correspondent with this incorruptible inheritance, we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will re-fashion our body, or change our vile body, in order that it may become of a like form with his glorious body, who will thereby make us capable of the enjoyments of heaven. This transformation of our body he will accomplish according to the working or the exertion of power whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself: for Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death indeed in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 3. 18. Christ’s resurrection being an example as well as a proof of our resurrection, he was raised by the agency of the Spirit, to shew that we shall be raised by the same power, exerted agreeably to the will of God through Jesus Christ. By this Spirit, also, speaking in Noah, he preached to the Spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when the patience of God, once waited

in the days of Noah, while an ark was preparing, in which few, that is eight souls were effectually saved by water; to which water, the antitype baptism (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) now serveth us also through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who, having gone into heaven, is at the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being subjected to him. 1 Pet. 3. 18—22. The water of baptism, Macknight observes, is here called *the antitype to the water of the flood*, because the flood was a type or emblem of baptism, in the three following particulars: 1st. As by building the ark, and by entering into it, Noah shewed a strong faith in the promise of God concerning his preservation by the very water which was to destroy the antediluvians for their sins. So by giving ourselves to be buried in the water of baptism, we shew a like faith in God's promise that though we die and are buried, he will save us from death, the punishment of sin, by raising us from the dead at the last day. 2. As the preserving of Noah alive, during the nine months he was in the flood, is an emblem of the preservation of the souls of believers, while in the state of the dead, so the preserving of believers alive, while buried in the water of baptism, is a prefiguration of the same event. 3. As the water of the deluge destroyed the wicked antediluvians, but preserved Noah, by bearing up the ark in which he was shut up, till the waters were assuaged, and he went out of it to live again on the earth, so baptism may be said to destroy the wicked, and to save the righteous, as it prefigures both those events: the death of the sinner it prefigures by the burying of the baptized person in the water, and the salvation of the righteous, by the raising of the baptized person out of the water to live a new life. Noah gave the answer of a good conscience towards God, by entering into the ark in a firm belief that God, according to his promise, would preserve him, and family by that very water which he knew was to destroy all the rest of mankind. *Baptism*, understanding thereby the answer of a good conscience, *Now sheweth us also through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*; because if Christ had not risen, being an impostor, he could not have saved any; but, by his re-

resurrection from the dead, being demonstrated the Son of God, (Rom. 1. 4. Acts 13. 33.) he is able to save all who believe on him; and in his resurrection he hath given an example, as well as a proof, of the resurrection of believers to eternal life. Baptism, as explained (being an ordinance by which persons are initiated into the church below, and a symbolical representation of the absolute, and literal regeneration or renovation of the whole person at the resurrection, as preparatory to *entering into the kingdom of God above,*) is, by a figure of speech, called *metonymy*, in which the sign is taken for the thing signified, often used for regeneration itself. Hence Irenæus, "Christ confiding to his disciples the authority of *regenerating unto God*, said unto them, Go and teach all nations, *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" About forty years before the time of Irenæus, we see Justin Martyr more than once use the word *regenerate* for *baptize*. Thus, "Then they are brought by us to some place where there is water; and they are *regenerated* according to this rite of *regeneration*, by which we ourselves *were regenerated.*"—John P. Campbell's Review of Mr. Robinson's History of Baptism, pp. 100, 1. It is in consequence of the same substitution of the sign for the thing signified, that the Roman Catholic Church, and some others, consider baptism, and regeneration synonymous in fact.

When Christ came to John to be baptized, John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou unto me? And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him—And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water. And lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo! a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Matth. 3. 13—17. Correspondent with this declaration of the voice, "Thou art my beloved Son," God is said to have begotten Jesus Christ by raising him from the dead; Acts 13. 33. and Paul says he was *declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* Rom.

1. 4. The baptism of Christ was not John's baptism, but the baptism *for the* REMISSION *of sins*. Acts 2. 38. The fulfilment of all righteousness, which he said at his baptism it becometh us to fulfil, consisted in, not only the establishment of the initiatory ordinance in the new dispensation, by which members were to be inducted into the christian church in future, but also the suffering, and death which he was to endure by imputation; by which he was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God, in him. 2 Corinth. 5. 21. This righteousness is further shewn by the declaration of the Saviour: "Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure in them; (which were offered by the law.) Then said he, lo! I come to do thy will, O God. By the which will, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. 10. 8—10. The mother of Zebedees children with her sons came unto Christ worshipping him, and desired that her two sons should sit, one on his right hand, and one on his left in his kingdom. But Jesus answered, and said, ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be *baptized* with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said, we are able. And he said unto them, ye *shall* drink indeed of my cup, and *be* baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left is not mine to give. The two sons of Zebedee had been previously baptized with water. "The Son of man came to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matth. 20. 20—23. 28. But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12. 50. All these passages are quoted with a view of shewing what I formerly observed, that the death of Christ, and his resurrection; and the death, and the resurrection of believers, are shown forth in the ordinance of baptism. Accordingly Paul observes, according to Macknight's translation, and commentary, in Rom. 6. 3, &c. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, have been baptized into the likeness of his death, (*viz.*) have been buried under the water, as persons

who, like Christ, have been killed by sin. *Besides we have been buried together with Christ by baptism into the likeness of his death* (ver. 5.) to teach us this lesson, that though we have been killed by sin, (ver. 6.) yet *like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the power of the Father*, to live for ever, (ver. 9.) *even so we also, by the same power shall enjoy a new, and never ending life in heaven with him.* For seeing Christ, and we have been planted together in baptism in the likeness of his death, occasioned by sin, *certainly* by being raised out of the water of baptism, we are taught that *we shall be also* planted together in the likeness of his resurrection—Ye know this also to be signified by baptism that our old corrupt nature was crucified together with him, that the body with its affections, and lusts, (Gal. 5. 24.) which sin has seized, might be rendered inactive, in order that we may no longer as slaves serve sin in the present life. *Since we have died with Christ by sin, we believe* that our baptism likewise teaches us *that we shall also* arise, and *live together with him in heaven* to die no more. Rom. 6. 3—6. 8.

It is not my design, in the above observations on baptism, to enter the list of controversy upon that subject. It is high time that the different denominations of christians should UNITE, and go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God; OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM, &c. Heb. 6. 1—2. My chief object in the remarks on baptism, is to get at the foundation of a great error which has obtained in almost every denomination. By transposing, *in imagination*, the physical operations of the Spirit, by which the resurrection of Christ was effected, and by which the bodies of believers are to be raised hereafter, to the bodies, and minds of men on this side of the grave, the word of God, by which these things are learnt, and believed, is superseded, and rendered useless—its instrumental character, in producing these mental effects, is either overlooked or denied; a strange metonymy indeed! The hope of a future resurrection depends upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the promise of God, that those who believe, and trust in him, shall be raised as he was. The delights, and joys of the mind, in anti-

icipating this fact, by which an entire renovation or regeneration of our persons will be effected, and we qualified or suited for the enjoyment of the spiritual world in glory; and the feelings which we experience in believing these things by the divine evidence given of their truth, are said to be produced by the *immediate* physical operations of the Spirit. The physical operations of the Spirit, by which these great things are to be effected, are objects of faith, and are learnt, and believed by the word of God; and, by being believed, we are born again to a hope of life beyond the grave, through the influence of which, together with the other doctrines, and the duties of the Gospel, established by the authority of God, we are enabled, aided by the providences of God, pain, and the apprehension of death, &c. to crucify the flesh, with the affections, and lusts, and to live by the faith of the Son of God. To prove the truth of these ideas more fully, I ask the religious reader to exclude from the view of his mind, as an object of faith, and the foundation of his hope, the prospect of a glorious resurrection through Jesus Christ: How entirely destroyed would be the life, and soul of religion, its joys, and felicities! Destroy the Gospel, or the gracious word of God, as the mean which conveys this knowledge, and assurance to the mind, and all the consequences of the christian religion, in the soul of the believer, are annihilated! Exclude also the FAITH, that God is, *and that he is omnipresent*; which are also produced by the revelations of God's Spirit by his word, and we are, by a necessity of things, atheists—all spiritual ideas are wanting; we could no more think than speak about them, without the words of God's Spirit, since immediate revelations ceased.

Section 8.

Objections answered.—The reason in favour of the immediate agencies of the Spirit, taken from human depravity, God's sovereignty, &c. attended to.

I am well aware of the many objections which impassioned eloquence may, and perhaps will employ, against many of the ideas expressed, and opinions contended for, in the preceding pages.

It may be asked whether men are to save themselves; whether the Spirit has taken leave of the christian world, after having established the truths of christianity; and whether the poor christian is left entirely destitute of the aid of the Spirit, and his influence, since the establishment of the truths of the Gospel? Such zeal would spare itself much of the fervour which is thus expended, by the reflection that the opinion about immediate agencies destroys the order which God has established: its advocates would assuredly appear at least in a questionable character in respect to a sound mind, were they to allege that God in order to supply our countrymen with crops, must create them out of nothing, or produce them without the intervention of seed, rain, heat, and the industry of husbandmen. Does he give crops without the seed being sowed, and suitable cultivation? No. As well might it be expected that the growth of grace should be realized without the means of grace. The means, and their efficacy are from God; he is the author of both. Who can do any thing in the natural economy, without the use of the materials, and principles of nature? And is it true that spiritual results are expected without instrumentalities? Were it to be received as a rule of discrimination in divine and natural things, not to suppose *a direct, and immediate interposition of divine power in any case where there are means or secondary causes sufficient to account for, and produce the effect*, the confusion, and error upon these subjects would be soon corrected. A man might be a religious creature, according to the right rules of reason, in the eyes of rational men, without being a fanatic.

I ask how I am to distinguish between those immediate operations, and inspirations of the Spirit contended for amongst those sects who call themselves orthodox, and the errorists of all descriptions, and even idolaters too? Do the true operations consist in feelings, ecstasies, and joys? The Shakers exceed in them, and so do the Indian Priests. Where ignorance of the qualities, and powers of human nature, its passions, and emotions, and the influence of imagination prevail, pretences to inspiration will soon gain credit. The advocates of the necessity of the immediate operations of the Spirit in order to the belief, and worship in the christian religion, do

not realize that they by the same arguments prove the necessity of them in the belief, and worship of Baal, of Moloch, Ashteroth, &c. Their worshippers undergo the most dreadful tortures to which their religion exposes them; of parents being burnt, and burning their children, and submitting to be crushed to death under the wheels of the car upon which the grim monster is moved.

It is urged that those immediate operations are necessary in order to overcome the passions, the appetites, &c. which belong to man by nature; and also to aid him in his religious exercises, on account of his natural weakness. The utter inability of man by nature to save himself, is acknowledged, and nothing short of a *Redeemer*, the *Mighty God*, can effect it. But, in the sense in which these things are taken, I ask, what is there in the weakness of human nature, and its depravities, which render it more difficult to believe in christianity, than in Mahometanism? Or does the christian religion require greater privations, and sacrifices? Does it come less authentic, and with weaker proof, than that, and those of the Pagan kind? Let us repair to the Tyrian, and Carthaginian sacrifices; to the idol Moloch, almost too shocking to be rehearsed. There we behold the most promising children, of noble, and reputable families, thrown into the arms of the molten idol who stands in the midst of a large fire, and is red with heat. What can be more horrid to the imagination, than to behold a father leading the dearest of all his sons to such an infernal shrine? Or a mother, the most engaging, and affectionate of her daughters, just rising to maturity, to be slaughtered at the altar of Ashteroth or Baal. They embrace their children, says Justin, with great fondness, and encourage them in the gentlest terms that they might not be appalled at the sight of the hellish process; begging them to submit with cheerfulness to this fearful operation. If there is any appearance of a tear rising, or a cry unawares escaping, the mother smothers it with her kisses. These cruel endearments over, they stab them to the heart, or otherwise open the sluices of life; and with the blood, warm as it runs, besmear the altar and the grim visage of the idol. These were the customs which the Israelites learnt from the people

of Canaan, and for which they were upbraided by the Psalmist in the 106th Psalm. Ask the parents thus crimsoned over, and their hands dripping, and smoking with the blood of their dearest, and most fond children, By what influence they perpetrated these most horrid deeds? In devout accents, they reply that the Spirit of their gods had directed them. I ask, whether human privation, the sacrifice of feeling, and natural disposition, are not much greater here, than is required by the christian religion? It is the knowledge of the truths contained in, and the customs, and manners formed by, the principles of christianity, that have stoped these cruelties, and exalted man to a noble state of improvement, and which, consistent with his highest perfection, extends to him the most refined, and exquisite enjoyments, and rational indulgences. The certainty of the truths of christianity is the foundation of its practical influences on the minds, and conduct of men: and that certainty consists in the evidence, the divine evidence, which it contains. The opinion of the natural weakness of the human mind, consisting in physical construction, and the necessity of foreign physical aid, independent of, and distinct from, the influence of knowledge in the understanding, to produce any thing great or good, is the foundation of all that enthusiasm which, in all ages, has been, and to this very day is, the reproach of christianity. The whole of the doctrine of the new birth, as consisting in immediate physical agencies of the Spirit on this side of the grave, is built upon it. As was before observed, there is, *naturally*, no more power in the human mind to know God *without* revelation, than there is in the eye to see without light. And there is, naturally, as little capacity in man to save himself from damnation, as there is for creating an universe, or subverting the throne of God. The only merit that can be attached to man, as it relates to his salvation, consists in nothing more than in merely receiving pardon. In order to this, as a moral, intelligent being, he must first know that he is condemned, and also that a reprieve is offered. And what other objects in preaching the Gospel are proposed, or accomplished?

By the operations of God's Spirit as detailed, in the signs,

and wonders which were performed to prove the truth of his revelations in the Gospel, is christianity believed, and has been since it first commenced; which are aided by the providences of God, by all the evils, and calamities of this life, and death itself, in being made practical. It is certainly true, that the conduct of men, and nations, is according to their opinions, and belief. The Shakers abandon matrimony, because they think it a sin to marry. Some of the Eastern idolaters stand in the most painful positions, for hours, and days together, in order to appease their deities. When all the diversity of tenets, inspirations, revelations, &c. &c. which are believed by polytheists, and errorists of every description, amongst the orders of christian heretics, and even those who call themselves orthodox, are brought together, and, in their turn, claim a pre-eminence on the score of their divinity, how is the difference to be settled? They all have their feelings, and imaginations, and all evince an equal degree of earnestness in their belief, and transports in their worship. Now, I ask, how this confusion is to be reduced to order, and the truth established? And how are those fine feelings to be tested, and their falsehood detected, and corrected? I answer, by truth. But, I am asked, what is truth? The word of God. How is it known to be the word of God? I answer, by the fact that it teaches us the knowledge of spiritual things, otherwise not known, and which are supported by miracles, which is an evidence divine, and not claimed by any other religion. It also, upon the authority of God, assures the believer that he shall have a happy immortality, &c. &c. After all that has been, or can be said about immediate operations, every calm minded christian will, if called upon, refer to its *evidences* for a proof of the truth of his faith. The effects of faith, *misapprehended*, are what have produced so much confusion. The religious affections, which are its sweets, and perfection—its joys, and comforts, are misplaced, and, on that account, misnamed. Instead of being the effects of the mind exercised by faith upon the glorious prospects, and promises which are opened to the view of the believer, and which he enjoys through faith, and by anticipation, they are made the cause. A momentary impulse of joy arising in the mind, is

said to be the effulgence of the Spirit by immediate illuminations. The Shakers have these in great excess, even almost to phrenzy. It is strange, surpassingly strange, that every species of erroneous religion should have its ecstasies; every pursuit of an agreeable nature, its occasional joys, arising from the nature, and constitution of the human mind; and that *the true Christian religion*, or the mind exercised by it, should be denied them! And why are they denied it? If error, which is confused, and false, excite the influence of passion, and imagination, joys, and ecstasies; why should the christian religion, which presents to the believer all that is great, and good; all that is desirable, and beatific; all that can ennoble, and perfect our nature, be refused the power of exciting joy, and happiness, without immediate agencies? I again repeat, that it is ignorance of the human mind, which is the foundation of all this absurdity, and which leads to so much distraction, and error in what are called revivals of religion. Imagination, and passion are the governing principles, instead of the understanding, the will, and the affections. The grace of God is misunderstood, and reproached by such ideas, and common sense is banished from the dominions of religion. The will, and affections will always be right, if they are subservient to the controul, and direction of a rightly informed judgment; consisting in the apprehension of truth by its evidence, and the agreement, and harmony of the parts which compose it. An understanding thus enlightened, and a judgment thus formed, will be ever sedate, tranquil, and discriminating, but not to the exclusion of religious joy; so far from that, they necessarily produce the most exalted joy which can possibly be derived from religion. The will, and affections, all the intellectual, and moral powers of our nature, are refined, and sublimated, by the contemplation, and enjoyment of the objects of the christian's faith; which are the most glorious, grand, and interesting, that can employ the attention, or felicitate the intelligent soul.

The doctrine of human depravity, *as explained by some*, is the foundation stone upon which is built the supposed necessity of the immediate agencies of the Spirit, and which forms the strongest battery against what I have written. I

ask, in what does human depravity consist? I answer, that it consists in apostacy from God, and in devotion to the objects of time, and sense, which administer to the animal appetites, desires, passions, &c. Without the revelations of God, since he withdrew from man in consequence of transgression, it is impossible that he could have any other objects of contemplation, pursuit, and interest, than those of an earthly, sensual kind; there would be a natural, intellectual, and moral necessity, for being thus restricted in desire, and enjoyment. This necessity is removed by the revelations of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In that proclamation of grace, spiritual things are revealed of an infinitely important nature. But that communication is not of such a nature, as to supersede the necessity of employing the powers of the mind in the use of the means, in attaining the knowledge, and belief of the things which it publishes, and by which alone spiritual things can be discerned, believed, and by faith enjoyed. No person is born with spiritual ideas. They are acquired from the word of God as the mean he has established for that purpose—they are propagated, from one mind to another, through that medium. To effect the end of spiritual instruction, God has established the government of the parent over the child, and imposed the giving of that instruction as a duty. He has also ordained the ministry for the same purpose. No person is born with the knowledge of letters; and without learning them by instruction or imitation, he never could know them: there is neither a natural, intellectual, or moral necessity, for a person who is born with common capacity continuing ignorant of them in a country where they are known.—So it is with regard to the Gospel. But I am told, that the spiritual knowledge derived by instruction, is head knowledge. I answer, that it is through the head that all knowledge comes. The knowledge obtained from the word of God is not less the knowledge taught by God's Spirit, or less spiritual, than if it was imparted by immediate revelation; nor is it less profitable on that account for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. 3. 16. In order, however, that it should produce these effects, it must be taught, and learnt as it is in truth the word of God.

Human depravity does not consist in the mere existence of appetite. None of the appetites, and affections belonging to human nature, are evil in themselves. A little reflection will satisfy the attentive inquirer, that they are all admirably calculated to promote the welfare, both of the individual, and of the species. The evil only takes place when the appetite, &c. are insubordinate to the law of God; when directed to an improper object; or cherished in an undue degree. It is this which in scripture is aptly styled *inordinate affection*. The design of the Gospel upon the world of mankind, in their religious, social, and individual relations, is to produce the subordination of appetite, &c. to the will of God, by directing the mind to, and employing the affections upon their *proper* objects.

To assert that the depravity of man is so great as to preclude the belief of the Gospel and its effects, when exhibited in its proper character, and evidence, aided by the providential circumstances connected with, and the sorrows incidental to man, is not less absurd, than to declare that a child is too ignorant to be taught the alphabet; that a government is too oppressive to be reformed, or rectified—that a fever is too high to be susceptible of the influence of the skill of a physician; or that the absence of light produces such an entire darkness or want of vision, as not to be removable by its presence. The very design of the Gospel is to remove, and remedy, **AS A MEAN**, all the evils, and infelicities which are consequential upon apostacy.

I must needs think that the objection taken to the suitability of the Gospel as a mental mean of divine appointment, for the obviation of the evils incidental to human depravity, without those immediate agencies, proceed from a quite different source than just apprehensions of the intrinsic nature of human depravity itself. They are necessary only for the support of erroneous theories, and opinions; by which the practical character, and usefulness of the Gospel are destroyed. Were those erroneous opinions correct, it would be impossible, from the very nature, and necessity of things, for man ever to be civilized, more than the beasts of the forest, without miracles, of an immediate physical nature, in changing the organic texture of the body, so as to

destroy the animal appetites, desires, &c. and, by immediate revelations, to direct the conduct.

All the information which those misconceived theories, and erroneous explanations supply to the understanding; and all the conjectures to which they prompt the ingenuity of the mind, leave it, if not instructed from the scriptures themselves, to meet the *real Christian religion*, when disclosed, as a thing of which it had no idea or recognition except by its name—as a wonderful novelty. How little could it be expected from their mystical glimpses, to find, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is at this moment the actual, and sole æconomy, by the principles and provisions of which, civilization is effected; savage nature is ameliorated; and social order, and individual happiness are secured: by the laws and requisitions of which, we shall be judged; which have declared the relations of man with his creator, and specified the exclusive ground in legible and intelligible terms of acceptance; and which is therefore of infinite consequence, as fixing the entire theory of the condition and destinies of man; or the final principles to which all theories, sentiments, and opinions are so constantly required to be brought into obedience.

It is objected, that I shut the door against, or make no provision for infants, idiots, the heathen, &c. and also restrain or limit the grace and sovereignty of God. I answer, that my opinions direct me to leave infants, idiots, the heathen, &c. with their maker, in the confidence that God will do right, who acts independent of human plans, and without regard to human devices. If it is consistent with justice and mercy to save them through Jesus Christ, of whom they have never heard, my heart will say amen; and it will not be repugnant to any theory which I have formed upon the subject. I attach no meritorious worth to any thing that man can do, even in the exercise of faith, *to merit heaven*. Salvation, and all the blessings we enjoy, are the free gift of God; they are bestowed graciously on account of Jesus Christ. I cannot see how the sovereignty of God can be introduced as an exception to any thing that I have said. The sovereignty of God, is as much manifested in the æconomy of his grace, as revealed through Jesus

Christ to man in the Gospel, and in the order which he has established, by which faith cometh by hearing the word of God, as can possibly be conceived of. Justice, truth, and faithfulness are pledged for the bestowment of every blessing promised in the new covenant, by God, upon those who believe on his Son. God has less power than any other being in the universe, to relieve himself from such necessity. He alone is essentially holy, just, and true; yet I see no diminution in the riches, freeness, or the fullness of his grace; an incapacity of binding himself by promises or declarations would be an incapacity of truth and faithfulness. The sovereignty of God, and the freeness of his grace are perfectly compatible with the revelation of his will, and the requisitions of the Gospel. The power and the will; the sovereignty, and the grace of God, can never be brought to oppose each other, nor can either of those be opposed to the word of God; or be made inconsistent with it, as his medium of communicating the knowledge of spiritual things to man—but they all unite in establishing it, and confer on it its divine authority and truth. Upon the truth and faithfulness of God, in his promises, every believer rests his hope of a glorious immortality.

It is not owing to a defect of power in the Trinity, or in any person of it, that the divine purposes cannot be changed, but because it is impossible for the power of God to break in upon the order of his distributive justice. It is upon this account only, that we read that Christ on a particular occasion, “could there do no mighty work.” Mark 6. 5. The power of doing a miracle was always present with him, but the *place* being *improper*, because of their unbelief, it made the *things impossible*. In the same manner, that declaration of the Lord in Gen. 19. 22. is to be understood: “*Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.*” No man would hence conclude, that the hand of God is straitened, or his power limited; but only that he does, and by his own nature *must* act agreeable to the disposition of things in the order he has established, and which is known to himself. Those things, as far as they relate to us, and are for our belief, and observance, are written in the book of God. They are

written there for our instruction; and if we will not believe them, with the evidence which God has given, it seems that we would not believe although one rose from the dead; and it may be on the same account that Christ could do no mighty work by reason of unbelief, because that it was improper, and therefore impossible, that God has not another shaft in his quiver for our conviction, if the Gospel fails. The order of his divine appointment is, that faith cometh by hearing the word of God. It is in this way that we are found of God, who sought not after him; and it is through this channel that faith is given to us by God. This is according to the decree of God; and also that without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. No one knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; and this revelation is made by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. This Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be learnt, and understood, except by the use of the faculties, and powers which God hath given us.

Faith has ever preceded the operations of the Spirit in the believer, as far as they relate to his *immediate* agencies upon him. John 1. 12. Gal. 3. 26. Mark 16. 16. Faith receives the promises of the new covenant. Gal. 3. 22. Eph. 1. 13. The Spirit is one of the promises. Acts 2. 38—39. Isai. 44. 3., &c. As the Spirit is a promise, and as we receive the promise by faith, his work is the consequence of faith by which he is received. Gal. 3. 14. John 7. 38—39. A sinner believes without the *immediate* operations of the Spirit, as his reception is in consequence of that belief. God justifies the ungodly, but he justifies none but those who believe. He saves sinners, but none but those that believe; therefore sinners believe unto salvation. Faith is the gift of God, and Christ is the author and finisher of faith. Eph. 2. 8. Heb. 12. 2. But how does God give faith? By his word. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10. 17. Acts 17. 31. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, &c. God is the giver of that faith which is produced by his divine evidence. Faith being the gift of God in any other

sense, puts it out of the sinner's reach, and destroys Gospel responsibility. But some say faith is produced by praying, striving, seeking, &c. How can the sinner call on God in whom he has not believed? Rom. 10. 14. Prayers without faith, James says, are good for nothing—they are an abomination before God. Jas. 1. 5—7. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 14. 23. It is said, we have natural, and not moral power, to believe, and that the moral power depends on God's Spirit making us willing. Faith does not depend upon will or disposition, but *on testimony*. We believe many things which we are unwilling to believe—as the loss of friends, the burning of our houses, death, &c. A sinner is unwilling to believe that he is exposed every moment to eternal ruin; yet how many do believe it, and tremble. God works in us through faith in his word to will, and to do after his good pleasure—our *natural acts are contrary to this*. We must, therefore, believe the word before God works in us a will, and disposition to serve him; indeed, it is by his operations in us in this way, that we are transformed into the same image, that we are made holy, without which no man can see the Lord. If God works the will or disposition in us to believe before we have faith, then this work is previous to faith in his word; consequently the word is neither the cause nor foundation of faith, but the cause is the previous work of the Spirit immediately upon the mind. This is the foundation of enthusiasm, and delusion; it is Shakerism. But if sinners, being perfectly unholy, are, by that means, unable to believe God, how was it that the perfectly sinless Adam believed the devil? He surely was as morally unable to disbelieve God, as sinners are to believe him. But, it is said that the sinner is dead, and cannot believe. I say, he can never live or be made spiritually alive, before he does believe. John 3. 36. John 20. 31. It is said that sinners are blind, and cannot see: it is by faith that they do see, and see those things which are not objects of sense, or of natural sight. We walk by faith, and not by sight. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11. 1. Jesus said, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20. 29. It is said, that if the unconverted sinner can believe by the instruction, and evidence of the

Gospel, that he is his own saviour. The bread that sustains the beggar, is the gift; and the person who bestowed it, is the giver, and benefactor. Some think they glorify God in debasing his creature, man, into a senseless image. Man, though fallen, is the noblest work of God on earth, and shews forth the glory of his maker. According to these ideas, it may be said we believe when we please. There are many things which I would be very willing, and pleased to believe, but, for the want of testimony, I cannot. There are, also, many things that I am unwilling to believe, not pleased with, and highly indisposed to believe—yet, from testimony, I am obliged to believe. They who make the objection, do not know that it falls upon themselves—they believe when they please, and are willing, for they profess never to believe but by a power extraneous to the word, and evidence—they then believe because they are willing, or please to believe. Every truth in the Bible is an object of faith, whether it be merely political, historical, or evangelical. The effects of faith are different. Faith in the law produces condemnation to a sinner; but faith in the Gospel, justification, and life. Faith in the promises of a faithful God, produces reliance, and trust in him; this faith increased produces assurance.

It is objected, that the human mind has naturally no spiritual capacity—that, until it is infused, implanted, or created, by the immediate agencies of the Spirit, there is as little effect produced by preaching or teaching the Gospel, as there is in speaking to a grave yard. Ezekiel's vision of the vally of dry bones is the favourite portion of scripture employed to prove this opinion. The influences of preaching, from the mouth of such theorists, are just such as might be expected. No person can, with propriety, and truth, be said to be interested or instructed, except those who have fallen into the same notions; and the failure of such preaching is rolled over on God, by being attributed to his *sovereign unwillingness* to do the previous work. The first, and favourite object of such instructors, is to make the people believe that they *cannot* believe the Gospel by its own evidence; and that, even should they believe it, by the evidence of record, that it is only a speculative faith, and not

connected with salvation. The natural mind is very strongly predisposed to believe this, because it absolves it from all obligation; and believing it, rejects christianity as absurd, and contradictory, being in opposition to the plainest principles of right reason, and common sense. The teacher, having succeeded, in the previous part of his discourse, in making the audience believe that they cannot believe what he calls the Gospel by its evidence, nor apprehend or feel the importance of it to their temporal, and eternal happiness, without those immediate agencies; under the pretence of doing his duty in declaring the whole truth, by which he professes to clear his skirts of the perdition of men's souls, he tells them, that if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, they will be doomed to everlasting perdition for rejecting him. While discharging the *last* part of duty, which is in contradiction to the former, and which is generally done with warmth, and in a manner highly declamatory, exhibiting the terrors of hell, and the torments of the damned on one side, and the glory, and joys of heaven on the other, it is said that the Spirit chooses to operate, and quicken them. As it is manifest that the preaching itself, taking what are called the doctrinal, and practical parts together, according to the most obvious principles of consistency, and just reason, could not produce any effect, agreeably to their own theory, all the effects which are produced are attributed to the immediate operations of the Spirit. No allowance is made for the influence of an impassioned elocution upon these awful, interesting, and grand subjects; it matters not how highly impressive the matter, and manner of address may be upon the audience, or intelligible the style, the effects are attributed to an immediate out-pouring of the Spirit. I am pleased with sublime pathos in pulpit eloquence: and, indeed, I cannot well conceive how a person, who perceives the force, and feels the practical importance of Gospel truth to the temporal, and eternal interests of men, can fail throwing life, and impressiveness into his discourses, and affecting his audience. Such effects are always divine, if produced by the truth, and authority of God's word. Many very good men, adopting the same opinions about immediate agencies, but who have not the same talent for speaking, and affect-

ing their audience, preach on for years, without any effect, and often quit the business on that account. Having been, unfortunately, too successful in the first instance, in making the people believe that the word of God is *a sealed book*, or *a dead letter*, and that an antecedent regeneration by the Spirit is necessary in order to their believing, and feeling its truth, they are unable to excite the passions, and awake the fears, and alarm, which are called the immediate operations. Such men, often with tears in their eyes, and, no doubt, with aching hearts, unless quieted by the benumbing, and soporific influence of fatalism, to which they often fly for consolation, and repose, regret that God should have so long committed his cause to their hands without blessing it, and pray that he would take it into his own. I mention these things, not with a design of ridicule, or with a view of wounding the feelings of any honestly religious person or denomination; but with a hope of exciting to serious reflection those in whose hands the awful, and supremely important charge of preaching the Gospel in *faithfulness*, and *truth*, is committed. A thousand subterfuges are employed to avoid the fearful imputation, and high responsibility of unfaithful, and erroneous teaching, and preaching of the Gospel; and to prove its unsuitableness for, and inefficacy in, producing spiritual, and moral improvement without immediate agencies. It is asked, if it is thus qualified as a mean for spiritual edification, and its evidences are suited for producing of faith, why every body do not receive instruction from it, and why every body did not believe who saw the miracles, &c.? These dernier objections are calculated to prove (if any thing) that God has mistaken the means which are necessary for the accomplishment of his own purposes; which are, the restoration of men to himself through Jesus Christ by the Gospel, and filling the earth with his knowledge, and glory. Hence it is, as above remarked, when the evidences which Christ gave of his authority, character, and divinity, are adduced, and relied on to prove them, consisting in his divine revelations, which are the source of spiritual, and supernatural knowledge, and the miracles which he wrought, the objectors reply, Why did not every body believe who heard him, and saw his

works? To such objections, the only reply which I can make, is, that God ever has treated, and does still treat, man as a moral being, whose mind is susceptible, in that character, of no other influence than that which knowledge, and motives produce. It is owing to this order in the divine œconomy, in respect to human agency, together with human depravity, and its consequences in the objectors, that such objections are brought against God, and his cause, by those who profess to advocate the divinity of the christian religion. According to such objections, if it be asked; Why angels transgressed, or man fell? the reply is, that God so directed them in the execution of his decrees. If God's secret will is opposed to his revealed command, and is executed by his agencies, it follows that sin cannot, in reality, exist at all; because sin, being the transgression of his law, and that law being his secret will, to which he compels obedience, in opposition to his revealed will, no transgression is chargeable upon any acts, in contrariety to the written rule. Such are the absurdities into which we are led by entering upon forbidden ground. Having denied the fitness of the Gospel for the ends it was established, men fly to the secret things of God to justify themselves.

The most cogent reason that I can assign for so few persons believing the Gospel by hearing it preached, and read, is, that they are taught they cannot believe it by its evidence. Miracles are scarcely ever touched upon but with a view of shewing their insufficiency for producing faith, and of proving that immediate operations, by the same Spirit which wrought them, are necessary. The preachers who pursue this method of address with their audience may very readily perceive its absurdity, by a familiar illustrative example. Suppose, for a moment, twelve discreet, intelligent men, taken from their congregation, and empaneled to try a cause in a court of justice, in which the whole evidence is written, and of record. The lawyer who has truth on his side, after *hinting* at the evidence, commences his address to the jury. He very gravely assures them, that, owing to their natural weakness, and ignorance of the subject *without the evidence*, they cannot possibly believe that his client has truth, and justice on his side *with it*; that, although the evidence is

very good, yet, being written, they cannot believe the things which it proves; and that in order to their belief, it is necessary that the facts recorded either be acted over before their face, which is not to be expected, or that they have an immediate inspiration to prove to them, or to impress upon their minds the truth of the case. This novel exordium over, the lawyer, proceeds to exhort the jury to believe, and decide that his client's cause is a just, and righteous one; and dencounces perdition upon them if they do not so determine. After the trial is over, he asserts that those of the jury who did believe as he exhorted them to do, in respect to the justice of the case, (which they might have done by disregarding the harangue, and exhortation of the lawyer, and *attending to the evidence*,) were influenced, and illuminated by immediate inspiration; and that he had been enabled, to say what he had said by the immediate directions of the Spirit; and that the dissenting jurors, and those who judged right, were influenced in their decisions by a divine decree. I ask whether the jury, and court, and every body else of common sense, would not pronounce the lawyer in a state of derangement? Not unlike this case, is the method of preaching which is productive of such little effect; by which so few of mankind pretend to believe in the Gospel, while the majority of those who do, adopt the same notions, and imaginations about the immediate operations, of their teachers. But it may be said that preaching the Gospel, and pleading Law are different; that the former employment relates to spiritual, while the latter relates to temporal concerns. Language was originally revealed by the Spirit of God; without it the lawyer must have been silent, and the trial of the case had been impossible; the idea of a God was obtained from revelation, and without it the jury could not have been sworn; without revealed religion, the trial by jury, our form of government, and civil polity, could never have had existence. Man is as absolutely a dependant being in the exercise of his mental, and corporeal powers on natural, and civil subjects upon the God who created, and supports him, as he is when employed upon spiritual things. Without the means of knowledge of the former, he is as destitute of ideas, and thought, as he is on the

latter when destitute of the word of God, &c. The principles of the divine œconomy in the grace of the Gospel, were no more designed to preclude the use, and exercise of the powers of the mind in acquiring the improvements, and blessings which God bestows through their use, than the principles, and laws of the rational, and civil œconomy were designed to administer to man their benefits without mental, and corporeal exertion.

To destroy second causes is to resolve every thing which we see, and feel into deity. The Egyptians having learnt that God existed, who governs all things, supposed that the overflowings of the Nile were his immediate acts, and not being able to account for them, they worshipped the God of the Nile; so with the Peruvians in respect to the sun. The great mass of the religious part of mankind being inattentive to the nature, power, and operations of their own minds, and believing that God is the author of the christian religion, established, and supported by his power, and Spirit, suppose that their feelings, &c. are the effects of his immediate agencies. We are sanctified *by* the truth. The word of God is not the first cause. Some one must speak if a word is spoken, and I could not hear, know, or believe the proposition revealed by it, if it were not spoken. It is by the word of God, expressive of his will, that I believe that I am destined to immortality, and that there will be a future judgment.

It is objected against the doctrine of acquiring moral ability, or the power of obedience by the faith of the Gospel, and of this faith working by love, purifying the heart, and overcoming the world; (and also to prove the necessity of immediate operations) that the devil is said to exert a positive influence, to operate internally on the minds of men; but that the devil does not speak, &c. I answer, the devil transformed himself into an angel of light, and spoke in words by an audible voice, the whole of his system to our first parents. His most successful ministers, being professed ministers of righteousness, as he was, take his creed for their text, and continue to inculcate it on the world to this day, "thou shalt not surely die, ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." This was all that was necessary for him

to teach, or for them to hear, to accomplish his infernal purpose. While ever they believed what God had told them, "thou shalt surely die," it was impossible for them to consent to eat the forbidden fruit, without preferring death to life, and happiness. Whenever they believed Satan, it was impossible to refrain from eating the fruit, which was to confer upon them such immense privileges. When Christ came, his doctrine was but little different from that which God taught Adam in paradise, "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The devil's creed is short as before, "you shall not be damned, though you persist in unbelief." This doctrine of Satan is not written in a book. Ignorance, and unbelief, are not like knowledge, and faith. They require no mental exertion, no evidence, no information to acquire them. The whole human race are possessed of them, *naturally*, since the fall, and their imaginations, and passions suggest to their thoughts other objects of pursuit, and other courses of action, than those prescribed by the word of God. Hence arises the opposition in their view between God, and them; and they gain the ascendancy, by the evidences that God has spoken being weakened, and the obligation to obey his law in opposition to carnal indulgence, not existing, by the opinion of the Spirit having failed to do his work. The ministers of error, to resist successfully the weapons of the Gospel, have only to persuade the sinner that he shall not die, though he live in sin; or that the Gospel is not offered to him; and it is quite immaterial by what means it is accomplished; whether by evasion, misrepresentation, or by representing it as a dead letter, or a sealed book, and that the faith of it is only speculative; that God's Spirit is absent, and must operate otherwise upon the heart than through his word, ordinances, &c. Knowledge, and faith are not like ignorance, and unbelief. Truth, divine truth, must enter into the view of the mind as revealed in God's word; must support itself by evidence, (as Locke says) supernatural, and divine evidence; must make such impressions by its apparent importance as to engross the attention, break through the natural indolence of thought, and the barriers raised by the senses, imaginations, passions, and opinions,

and reconcile it to the mind to hear, consider, digest, judge, and treasure it up as a pearl of great price; the spiritual life-giving word of the reigning Prince of Peace. These are the ends for which a gracious God instituted the Gospel—it produces these effects by its instrumental operations. Every article of practical faith has the same obstacles to encounter, and the same opposition to surmount. Hence there is a necessity for records, “line upon line, precept upon precept;” ordinances, and providences; pains, and sorrows; and the certainty, as well as the fear of death, and an eternity to come. The blind, and stupid insensibility, as well as the natural indisposition to spiritual things, make the pains, and sorrows of this life, which are the effects of sin, as necessary to awaken attention, and sensibility to the truths of the Gospel, and to break the force of appetites, passions, and worldly interests, as the free, and extensive application of blistering plaisters is necessary, in low stages of the nervous fever, for exciting the system, in order to its being susceptible of the restorative operation of medicine. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is medicine to the soul; its belief heals moral diseases, it supports the disconsolate heart, and pours consolation into its bleeding wounds—“the words that I speak, said Christ, they are Spirit, and they are life”—through them the great head of influences, and author of ordinances, gives faith in Jesus Christ, which is, the light of life to the soul, as it is the earnest of that glorious immortality which he has promised to confer at the resurrection from the dead. We know not the power of Spirits, or how they work upon bodies. By the same reason that a Spirit can lift a straw, he may a mountain, for ought that I know. All we have to trust to, in this case, is the restraining power of God. Were it not for this, I doubt not but the devil could take away my life, or inflict terrible diseases upon me, as upon Job. Herein the great power, and goodness of God, is manifest, that he has never yet permitted the devil to work miracles in opposition to any whom he sent, except when the remedy was at hand, and to shew his power the more, as in the case of Moses, and the magicians, &c. That the death of Christ has had a great effect in restraining the influences of satanical beings

over men, is evident from what appears in profane history, as well as the declaration of the scriptures. The Pagan world, before the coming of Christ, and before his death, was greatly afflicted by satanical influences; as appears from the Pagan writings. The following may be taken as some of the scripture evidences upon this subject:—"And the seventy returned again, and with joy, saying Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld satan as lightning falling from heaven—behold I give you power over all the power of the enemy." Luke 10. 17—19. Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour—Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, BUT FOR YOUR SAKES. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me. (This said he, signifying what death he should die) John 12. 27—28. 30—33—chapt. 5. 22. 27, and 14. 30. He will reprove the world of judgment—because the prince of this world is judged. John 16. 8—11. For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3. 8. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; *that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.* Heb. 2. 14. Having spoiled principalities, and powers, (by his cross) he made a shew of them, openly triumphing over them in it. Colos. 2. 15. Acts 26. 18. Ephes. 2. 12. Acts 20. 2. Luke 13. 16. The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6. These restraints upon satan, and evil spirits, by virtue of the meritorious death of the Saviour, under the mediatorial government of Jesus Christ, are of a very dissimilar character from those which are supposed to be exerted *immediately* upon the minds of men. The restraining power, exerted upon the prince of darkness,

in preventing his violence upon the minds of men, is necessary to their possessing the powers, and sustaining the relation of moral, and accountable beings, under a gracious government. By virtue of God's love to mankind, and the death of Christ, this is effected, as it is on the same account that the proclamation of grace is made, with heavy penalties against those who reject it, and glorious promises to those who accept of it, and obey it.

I may be told by those who advocate the immediate agencies independent of the word or distinct from it, that they do not pretend to hold any opinion upon the subject of the operations, that is not according to the scripture. To this I answer, that all these notions are unsupported by the scripture, and are in opposition to it. The promises of which the prophets speak, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jerem. 31. 33; and also Ezek. 11. 19—20, and 36. 26—27; Zach. 12. 10; and also Joel 2. 28. are explained by the promises of Christ in respect to the gifts of the Spirit; and, in a particular manner, by their fulfilment as detailed in the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts 1. 15. is stated the number of disciples upon whom the Holy Ghost fell in Acts 2. 2—4, 33. 38—39, and 5. 32, and 10. 44; also Gal. 3. 14. Eph. 1. 13: all these scriptures go to prove, expressly, that the Spirit was only received in *consequence* of faith. There have been *but two* OUT-POURINGS of the Spirit. The first was on the Jewish day of Pentecost, and he fell upon none but the disciples before Peter began to preach. The second was upon Cornelius, and friends, *after* they believed. Acts 11. 17.

As the scriptures are express upon this subject, in restricting the out pourings of the Spirit in the Apostolic day to believers, and as no new order of things has been established by God, of which he has given us any information, those who profess (and are sincere in that profession) to regulate their opinions by the Scriptures, may easily, and with confidence correct this their great error, by the word, in respect to the objects, and subjects upon whom the Spirit, who is the official promulgator of the Gospel, operates. They whose province it is to teach, will also perceive the

necessity of using more simplicity, and earnestness in urging the evidences of the Gospel, in order that their hearers might believe it true, and feel its influences—they will perceive very plainly that the proof upon which the faith of the Gospel rests is intelligible. John 20. 30—31; and they will also understand, practically, the channel through which it is acquired. Rom. 10. 17. They will have no difficulty in settling the correct doctrine upon these subjects; and in doing of it, they will pay but little court to their imaginations, passions, and appetites; but will thank God that the Gospel is the mean by which their intelligent nature is not only illuminated by the Spirit; but, that it is also the rule by which the understanding subdues passion, appetite, and imagination to the obedience of faith, and makes them subservient to the honour, and glory of God, and the happiness of society.

There are some very zealous teachers who profess to be taught (on account of the regular succession from the Apostles, and of the imposition of hands, I suppose, as the Christians, and particularly the disciples were in the first century) by the immediate teachings of the Spirit; to have the things of Christ shewed unto them, and by the same monitor to have spiritual things brought to their remembrance immediately, according to Christ's promise to his disciples, who had been with him from the beginning. John 14. 26, and 15. 26—27. To such persons I would observe, that by the evangelist, John 21. 25. we are informed that Christ did a vast number of miracles which are not written, and of which those persons in our day, (of whom I profess to be one) who are only taught the things of God by his word, know nothing: Now, if those persons, who are *immediately* taught according to Christ's promise to his twelve disciples, can, and will tell what those things were which are not written, and prove that their teaching in this respect is true, then they will deserve with confidence to be believed in this article of their divine illuminations. I mention this case, merely to suggest the *possibility* of their being mistaken. I think for the most part, there is much greater correctness, and consistency amongst the lawyers in their recollection, and application of the law by the use of their faculties, than

are evinced by those teachers of christianity, who profess to be immediately taught by the Spirit, and to have things brought to their remembrance by his suggestions. His immediate teachings in the days of the Apostles, by which they wrote the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelations, were very different from what they have been since. His revelations to the Apostles were consistent, and uniform. Since that period they have been diverse, and contradictory. *Then*, they produced unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. Since that period, they have produced disunity wrangling, and violence. In the Apostolic day, the gifts of the Spirit were imparted to those who believed in Jesus Christ, after they believed, by the imposition of hands. It is now stated by good authority, that in Great Britain, out of nearly twenty thousand clergymen upon whom the bishop's hands have been laid, nine tenths are deists.—See Simpson's Appeal. Our only security for correct knowledge upon divine subjects, and the proper recollection, and use of it for the instruction of others, and for our own benefit, is in an humble dependance upon the word of God as the medium of his communications, and the right use of our faculties with which he has blessed us. At the same time, we with earnestness endeavour to obey the divine command, to work out our salvation with fear, and trembling, we should not forget, (in order to excite a due sense of dependance upon God, of his goodness, and mercy,) that it is God, who inwardly worketh in us from benevolence (as Macknight translates it,) both to will, and to work effectually; for in him we live, and move, and have our being. By the Gospel, he commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; of which he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead: Him hath God exceedingly exalted, upon whom he hath bestowed a name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, (the angelic hosts) of things upon the earth, (men) and of things under the earth, (all who are in the state of the dead); and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. who hath

made him, in the human nature glorified, governor, and judge of all.

Self-distrust, and examination ought to be excited in the minds of the majority of the teachers in the present age, on account of the striking difference which is manifest between the manner, and matter of their preaching, and instruction, and those of Christ, and his Apostles. The great object for which the disciples were sent into the world was to disciple it to christianity; and the very first object of all their concerns was to demonstrate the death, resurrection, and expiatory sufferings of Jesus Christ—to open the eyes, of the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a glorious inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in him. Acts 26. 18. Their manner of preaching may be seen by examining Peter's, and Paul's different sermons. How very different the preaching for many centuries back, and especially the sermons for the most part in the present day: they are, with but a very few exceptions, addressed only to those who are already religious. Nor is it possible, consistent with their theories, to preach to those who are called the unconverted; for their preaching can only be profitable after the Spirit has regenerated them according to their doctrine—until that is the case, they can neither understand nor believe—they had as well preach in an unknown language—in the Hebrew tongue, to an audience who only understands the English language, till this operation of the Spirit is performed. These horrid errors proceed from misconceived notions, in respect both to the design, and effects of the out pourings of the Spirit on the day of pentecost at Jerusalem, and upon Cornelius, and friends; as well as the real character of those upon whom he fell—*they were all believers*—and also of the grossly absurd opinions which have been formed of the expression of our Saviour to Nicodumus, the wind bloweth where it listeth, &c. In consistency with these errors it is thought that the Spirit falls upon the *unbelieving* audience while the preacher is speaking, on account of Christ's

promise to his disciples, "lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

No person can attach more importance to the ministry than I do. The mere forms of religion are of great importance—there is no form of the christian religion that has not its advantages, when uncoerced by civil authority. I would rather hear Christ preached of envy, strife, and contention, than to banish the ministers, and the forms of christianity from society; for, in that case, the salt of the earth would be *entirely* wanting, and nothing could preserve society from moral putrefaction. There is, however, as great a difference as can be conceived of between right, and wrong preaching, in their practical effects. I cannot better express my ideas upon this subject, than by quoting the words of Jeremiah relative to the true, and false prophets: "Behold a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: **IN THE LATTER DAYS YE SHALL CONSIDER IT PERFECTLY.** I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. *But if they had stood in my council, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.* Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. I have heard what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and *he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully: What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock to pieces?* Therefore, behold I am against

the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith—they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Jerem. 23. 19—32.

It seems that, however sacred the office of the ministry, and however just the claim of those who rule well, and labour in the word, and doctrine, to double honor, that the mere office, and station do not sanctify error, nor render inexcusable those who do not speak God's word faithfully. He has not only said that the substitution of dreams, and men's devices for his word, shall not profit his people, but that he will feed such prophets on wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall. Jerem. 23. 15. 32.

The above quotation, and observations are made merely to suggest the necessity of realizing the suitableness of the means of the Gospel, if faithfully employed for the end proposed, in the order which divine truth, mercy, and faithfulness, has established. The great reformation looked for, and anxiously expected, in order to the prosperity of the Gospel, must begin with christians, and, in a particular manner, with the teachers of christianity.

As the twelve hundred, and sixty years of declension, error, and darkness, spoken of by Daniel, and John, verge to a close, the opinions, and views of the christian world will become more, and more enlarged, and practical upon the subject of the Gospel, its suitableness will become apparent for imparting to the understandings of men the knowledge of God, and of transforming them by the renewing of their mind. As yet, only the grey dawn of the millennial state appears. Each sect, and denomination have a very indistinct vision of each other, and their perceptions are of such a nature (owing to the state of mind by which, and the media through which they are made,) as greatly to magnify, and exaggerate their supposed, and real errors. The blush of the millennial morning will, in a short time, give way to the refulgence of the rising sun. The Gospel is spreading from one end of the world to the other. The Bible is multiplying to an incalculable degree. The Lion hath roared, who will not fear! the Lord hath spoken, who

Can but prophecy! Am. 3. 8. The day is not far distant when iniquity shall have an end; the diadem, and the crown shall be removed; him that is low shall be exalted, and him that is exalted shall be abased; for the Lord will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he come, whose right it is, shall reign. These things are accomplishing through the chastisements of heaven, and the prosperity of the Gospel. Behold all Europe drenched in blood, and with rapid strides advancing to the valley of Megiddo, where the battle of the Lord will be fought, and the beast, the false prophet, and anti-christ—the tri-headed monster will close the bloody tragedy of murdered millions, and fall themselves by their own violence. When the period shall arrive of Gospel triumph, and when the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea, all distinctions, and party names in religion will be swept away by the swelling flood of knowledge, and righteousness. Then will be felt, and realized the force of the prayer of the blessed Redeemer, the necessity for the observance of which will be acknowledged by all, and will be made a paramount matter of conscience, expressed in the following impressive words: “Neither pray I for these alone (the twelve disciples) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE—THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME.” John 17. 20—21.

Section 9.

The views, and effects of Faith; and the means conducive to its practical exercises.

The preceding Sections of this Chapter have been employed upon the means of faith, and their operation in producing it; as well as upon the objections which are usually made against the principles advocated. The present Section will conclude the chapter on faith. What has been hitherto said, related to the *principles* of the christian faith; what follows, relates to the *active operations* of faith, or to *christianity in exercise*. A life of faith is a life derived from

spiritual things, which are discerned by the eye of the mind through the word of God; “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,” said Paul. Gal. 2. 20. We will first attend a little to the perceptions of faith.—The word of God is the only light to the mind in discerning spiritual things. It may not be uninteresting, or foreign to the present subject, to exhibit, by contrast, the difference between a mind illuminated by the word of God, and which receives it as the exclusive light of spiritual vision, and one which rejects it. In the view of the former, all things are tributary to the praise of God. The heavens, and the earth declare his glory. The mountains, and the hills break forth in singing, and the trees, and the floods clap their hands with joy together. The various seasons of the year, seed time, and harvest—the different orders of creation—all the blessings of an individual, social, and religious nature, unite in one great concert in the view of the christian mind, of praise to God through Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace. The christian is not an unaffected spectator, but ravished by the glory, mercy, and goodness of the great Creator, and Father of mercies, his heart glows with seraphic love, and he calls upon all that is within him to be stirred up in praise to God.

Even the grave yields the palm of triumph to King Jesus, who snatched the iron sceptre from death, and inflicted a deadly wound upon the king of terrors—All hell is made vocal by the word of God to the mind of the christian—at the death of Immanuel, all nature felt the the power of a dying Saviour; the prince of darkness, with his infernal attendant spirits, rejoiced with a malignant joy, having spent their greatest rage upon the Son of God: but at his resurrection, hell howled through all its horrid mansions; he ascended amidst the hosannahs of the heavenly hosts, assumed his deserved throne, honoured by the Father. and adored by the general assembly of the church of the first born on high: but in the midst of the triumph, the eye of faith beholds him lowering the heavens, and coming down, and inviting, and intreating sinners to be reconciled to God through his mediation. While the word of God presents to

The eye of the christian this sublime, interesting, and amazingly diversified scene of things, (not seen by sense, and which is only known, and perceived through the revealed representations of God's Spirit, which awaken in him the richest profusion of joy, wonder, love, and praise) the mind which rejected, or was never illuminated by the word of God's Spirit, neither sees, nor hears, nor feels any of these things; but acts, and thinks as an atheist, or the beasts of the field that perish. Entirely insulated by time, and sense, and knowing no other God but his belly, his views extend no farther than to those things which he sees, and which administer to his appetites, and desires, his distinction amongst men, and projects of ambition. His all is here; he has no home but his house, nor prospects beyond the changeable society of men, and the horizon which surrounds him. He is ignorant of the God who made, and supports him; and of the redeemer, and mediator who keeps him out of hell; he knows not his destiny, and uses (if he has ever heard it) the name of his God as a common place word, to set off expressions of impiety, and to prop up acts of injustice, and fraud. While he is thus imprisoned in the womb of time, and sense, and exclusively occupied by their concerns, which make him more earthly, the christian in the exercises of his faith lives upon things not seen, his thoughts dwell with God, his treasure is in Heaven. A life thus produced, and thus employed, administers the most sublime intellectual felicity to the soul, by the spiritual, and celestial food which sustain it. At the same time, the mind is thus nurtured, and divinely assimilated, it views all things sublunary, as trifling, and vanity, and is itself humbled in the dust by a sense of its many transgressions, and ungratefulness to God for the gift of his Son; who is the great head of the spiritual government to man, of all earthly blessings, and the medium of all divine, and spiritual influences. The word of the Gospel of God with him, is truth—it is Spirit, and life, in the prospects which it opens, and in the spiritual food, which it imparts to the soul. The christian looks *beyond* the grave; the infidel *stops at it*. The christian has his home with God; and is a pilgrim on that account in this world, looking for

another, and a better country—for an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder is God. He also looks with bowels of compassion, and a bleeding heart upon his infidel fellow creature, whose home is truly beyond the grave, whose abode is a place of blackness, of darkness forever more, without repentance, if he sins out his day of grace. The infidel who rejects the spiritual glass through which alone the prospect beyond the grave can be seen, despises the solicitude of his christian friend, and charges him with enthusiasm, fanaticism, &c.; and satisfies himself with involving the whole of futurity in the impenetrable clouds of darkness, and uncertainty; and says to his soul, take thy ease—eat, drink, and be merry.

The christain views all the evils and calamities of life, and death itself as the wages of sin—he beholds the Almighty Father, filled with compassion, and love, and, determined on his ransom at any expense, clothed in vengeance, smiting the very earth with a curse, inscribing man's degeneracy, and danger, and his own displeasure against sin in letters of blood; on man, and beasts, on the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and on every creeping thing that creepeth on the face of the earth; while all nature groans and travails in pain for his deliverance; and, to crown all, he beholds the Father of mercies giving up his only begotten Son to become a curse for man that he might escape the curse of a broken law—and he beholds this glorious Immanuel sinking under the weight of vengeance, and crying in an agony, my God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? At his death he beholds the sun darkened, the earth shaking to its centre, the rocks rending, the hills trembling. All this he beholds through the eye of faith by the light of revelation, whilst the natural man, seeing only through his natural eyes, views sickness, and sorrow, and death, as accidental circumstances; and as having no other origin than in the necessity of nature, without any reference to moral causes; and the scenes, and sufferings of the Saviour as chimerical, although in reality the meritorious cause of his own being. Again; the eye of the christain's mind beholds his God always present, supporting him, and the beasts of the field, as well as the man who denies his existence; he beholds him too as hav-

ing decreed that time shall end, and that there shall be a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell, when the wicked, and all those who forget God, shall be consigned to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death—while he beholds all these pleasing, fearful things, the natural mind sees nothing of them, and says there is no God. The christain beholds the cross of Christ through the explanations given by the Spirit of God, exhibiting an awful expression of God's love to man, and his everlasting hatred to sin; designed also to guard the sinner, when thus perceived, against presumption, and despair—shewing that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared—the natural man sees the cross through his natural eyes, and declares it to be foolishness. And why all this difference, this amazing difference? I answer, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them (as a natural man) because they are spiritually discerned. These spiritual things are revealed by God's Spirit, and were spoken, and are written not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, explaining spiritual things, in spiritual words. They can only be seen through the representations, in the Gospel, and in those representations the mind beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is by this mean of mental preception that we can look at things not seen, and which are eternal, while the things which are *naturally* seen are temporal, and faideth away. It is by the former made of preception that we see the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we know there is a God in trinity, who are engaged in our salvation; that there are angels, a heaven, and a hell, and that man is to be immortal, and the inhabitant of one or the other; and it is through this representation of the Spirit of God that the terms of acceptance are made known. I might have observed that the christain beholds King Jesus as the Governor of the world, and the source of all moral order through his divine principles, and heavenly influences; that civil government itself, as far as it is a blessing, and

answers the purposes for which it ought to be instituted, derives all its maxims from the wisdom which came from above, while the anti-christian mind refers all those things to the energies of human nature, unaided by revelation, and who asserts that our civil rights have no more dependance on our religious opinions than our opinions in physics or geometry, and that of course a man is as honest who is an atheist as one who lives with the fear of God before his eyes, and makes it a matter of conscience, as a principle of duty imposed by the command of his maker, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. As the christian religion in its purity, begets charity, and benevolence, it awakens in the heart of its possessor an extreme anxiety that those who differ as by the contrast appears above from him, should drink at the same fountain with himself, and should see as he sees. For that purpose, he urges the necessity of the spiritual light, the word of God, by which alone the mind can be renewed by knowledge after the image of him who created it; as it is through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, that grace, and peace are multiplied: according as his divine power giveth unto the believer all things that pertain unto life, and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory, and virtue. We must, in prosecuting our views of the perceptions, effects, and fruits of faith, leave the poor infidel to grope on in the dark, enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season, which are earthly, sensual, and devilish, and lead down to the pit. I will now enumerate the personal effects of faith upon the believer.—“Faith worketh in us” righteousness, which is the fruit of faith, and can arise from no other principle—peace of conscience through a sense of the forgiveness of sins, which proceeds from the belief that what God has said is true, and what he has promised he will perform. A certainty of the truth of the scriptures is the very essence of faith—it produceth in us ready, and pure obedience to the will of God—the true fear of God, though we see him not—it produces contempt of this world, being the victory that overcometh the world—it therefore gives constancy under all trials; it supports us as seeing

him that is invisible—moderation in prosperity—distrust of our own powers—full confidence in the divine mercy—justification before an assembled universe at the great day of assize, through the meritorious death of Jesus Christ.

Faith is nourished by frequent prayer—by frequent thanksgiving—by the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and Baptism—by attending on the preached word—by the mortification which keeps us separate from the world—by the daily reading of the scriptures—by daily meditation on heavenly things—by acts of love, and charity—and by afflictions. Hope is that part of a living faith by which we expect things to come, according to the promises of God. It has the same effects in the christian, that a temporal hope has in the husbandman, who ploweth, and soweth, in expectation of the harvest; and spares neither labour nor expense. So the christian is never weary of well-doing, knowing that he shall reap if he faint not. He bears sufferings with cheerfulness, as knowing that all the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. It is the staff of life, to support the steps of those who would otherwise faint in their journey through this wilderness: it presents daily to the mind the promises of the heavenly Canaan.

Charity is the love of God for himself, and the love of man for the love of God; which is best shewn by helping him forward in the way of his salvation. Charity gives perfection to the will, as faith does to the understanding. Faith begets charity, and charity increases faith; which, without charity, will go out as a lamp without oil. Faith is the root, and charity are the branches bearing fruit; and the branches can bear no fruit, unless the root supplies them with sap. Without this, they dry up, and are withered. Without faith, hope, and charity, man is all sin, or has nothing toward salvation. All these works of faith, and means of nourishing it, cannot be appreciated (except by viewing their practical consequences) but by those who have spiritual perceptions, which can never be until the word of God is received, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of of God; and then it will effectually work, and not

until then. In order to these effects, *the natural knowledge of spiritual things* must be exploded, and the instruction, which is from the Spirit of God alone, resorted to, and acknowledged as such; then the terms, faith, hope, and charity, will be understood, and cultivated, and the christian world will thereby become a world of christians; all seeing eye to eye, through the same celestial glass, reflecting the same divine, and spiritual light upon the gloricus subjects of the future world, and the relations of things.

It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Math. 4. 4. How can men live on the word of God, unless they make mental, and moral food of it? It is thus employed in reading the scriptures; in meditating upon the realities which they disclose, and which are of an insensible nature. Devotion is of like character, when properly engaged in. Not as some who seem to expect by their fervent prayers to change the plans of heaven, or to give a new direction to the purposes of God. In devotion the word of God is indispensable—it is as much impossible to pray without the use of God's word, as it is impossible to eat without food, or to see without light; this is evident in private, and silent devotion. Upon divine things we think, and speak in words, as it is by their sense, and meaning believed, that spiritual desires are excited. Hence it is, that the word is the life, and soul of the christian in his religious exercises. It is by those exercises of faith in the christian life, that it works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. It is thus, that those who by use, have their mental senses exercised to discern both good and evil: They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Their consciences are thereby made daily more alive to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of its opposition to God, and his law. It is by the progressive influence of faith in the life of the christian, that the human character is raised from a state of nature, and sensuality, to a resemblance of its maker. This is the work of sanctification; it is begun in time, and will be perfected in eternity. Holiness does not consist in such

a state of heart, as to feel willing to be damned for the glory of God, according to the Hopkensian error. As the good Dr. Witherspoon observes upon that subject, "The opinion is so repugnant to nature, and to that very solicitude about eternal happiness, by which the conscience is first laid hold of, that it appears to be utterly impossible. There is such an inseparable connection between our duty and happiness, that question should never have been moved. The proposition seems to me necessarily to imply an impossibility. What is damnation? It is to be forever separated from, and deprived of the fruition of God. Is this then a doubtful object, either of desire, or acquiescence? It is to hate God, and blaspheme his name, as well as to be banished from his presence. Can this be tolerable to any true penitent?; or is it reconcilable to, or consistent with subjection to his righteous will? Can any creature be supposed to please God by giving up all hope of his favour? Or is it less absurd than "disobeying" from a sense of "duty," and "hating" him from a principle of "love?" Witherspoon on Regeneration.

Actions originally pleasurable or indifferent, or even in a considerable degree painful, are performed at first from an interested motive, that is, with a view of gratification, or advantage. No man can love, and worship God without the previous knowledge of him in his lovely character, as a God who so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son as a sin offering, that through him he might have mercy upon the sons of men; and as the creator, preserver, and governor of all things. These things are presented to the eye of the mind, by the revelations, and representations of the Spirit of God in his word, and they can only be believed in, with rational assurance, by the divine testimony, which proves them true. The authority of God, who is omnipotent, and governs all things, speaking in his word, is the power by which the mind crucifies the flesh, with the affections, and lusts, which is contrary to nature, and is violently opposed by it. Actions repeated a sufficient number of times, generate affections, or a *tendency* to perform them, independent of the advantage to be derived from it. The same causes continuing to operate, the affection will gradu-

ally attain such a degree of vigour, as to be of itself sufficient to produce the action, without any attention whatever to the interested motive, as such. The affection, in this case, is called *disinterested*; and the essence of a disinterested affection is, that its only object is its own gratification. Hence it follows, that disinterestedness respects the *degree*, and not the *tendency* of the affection—it is equally applicable to affections of good or bad tendency; that is, either virtuous or vicious; hence the divine rule “bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he becomes old he will not depart from it.” And again, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are *accustomed* to do evil.” Thus *avarice*, as well as *benevolence*, may be in a high degree disinterested; as, when money is saved from a mere habit of saving, without any distinct view, either to present, or to future advantage. An affection, therefore, the tendency of which is to ultimate happiness, may, at the same time, be perfectly disinterested; and it is necessary, to consummate virtue, and felicity, that it should be so. The objection, therefore, against the definition of virtue given above, as being inconsistent with disinterested love of virtue, is of no weight, being founded in ignorance of, or inattention to, the true theory of human nature. From the origin, and history of the disinterested affections, it is obvious that virtuous actions are first performed from interested motives, and that, by the repetition of these actions, virtuous affections are generated, which gradually become disinterested. Hence it follows, that it is an error to represent virtuous affections as innate, and likewise to assert that disinterested love of virtue is the first approach to a virtuous character. It would be equally consistent with the philosophy of the mind, to maintain that the first step towards avarice is a disinterested love of money. In rendering to God our obedience, we consult, and secure our own felicity in the best, and most effectual manner we possibly can. This is indeed the proper operation of enlightened, rectified self-love. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the present life, and of that which is to come.” No man ever did obey the law of God by the dictates of his *natural feeling*, any

more than a savage the laws of society by his natural wants. In both instances, those feelings, and wants propel to gratification, in violation of the law, and whenever they are restrained, it is not by instinctive or infused principles, but by the authority of the laws, apprehended by the mind. Fear, for the most part, is the first moving principle which produces obedience to the laws of God, and man. It does not follow, that, because the natural disposition, and desire of uncultivated man is to use, and occupy whatever presents itself to him, indiscriminately, which is suited to relieve his wants, and painful necessities, that, therefore, a Republican Government is a bad form of government, because it imposes restraint upon natural appetites, desires, &c. The government of God pays no court to the passions, but imperatively commands restraint. Against this law they rise in rebellion; for the desires of the flesh, the objects of avarice, ambition, &c. and a mind devoted to them, their gratification, and pursuit, which make it earthly, sensual, and devilish, are necessarily at war with the laws, and government of God. The law of the mind, which is God's word believed, is that which brings into subjection the laws of the flesh. Such is the nature of the government of God, under the dispensation of grace, that a display of his power in establishing his authority, and manifesting his displeasure against sin, must make man tremble as it does devils; but his goodness, and his mercy to the former, displayed through Jesus Christ, necessarily excite love in the heart which is subdued to the obedience of faith, while the latter must continue to tremble on, to whom the penalties of the law is the constant language of their God. James, in his Epistle to the twelve tribes of Israel, tells them, "Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble;" but he does not say that they, the twelve tribes, believed in Jesus Christ—that would be salvation; God out of Christ is a consuming fire. Behold, therefore, the goodness, and severity of God.

Once the passions are subdued, and the wicked imaginations are brought down, which are often done by the *terrors* of the Lord, as they are the great foundation of persuasion to men, the understanding perceives the great excellency

of God's government of grace. Correspondent with the displays of power, justice, wisdom, mercy, goodness, and truth, which form its essential characters, will be the approbation of the understanding, the obedience of the will, and the glow of the affections. The cup of sensuality is dashed, and poisoned by the prohibition of God, thus manifested; the appetites, however, are not extinguished. All beings capable of knowing, comparing, and judging, are capable of willing, desiring, and tending to what appears to them good, and perfective of their being. Love to God implies a competent degree of knowledge of, and acquaintance with his character. A love without knowledge is the love of an idiot—not of an intelligent being. We must both know *what* we love, and *why* we love it. We know why we love the world, pleasure, our relatives, and friends; and why we love a republican form of government. The understanding, will, and affections, are the faculties or principles of our intelligent moral nature. The united influence of them, determines our words, actions, and pursuits. Proper apprehensions of the divine character, engage, and occupy all these principles, and powers, in the most exalted, and refined degree. Love to God, thus produced, is the language of right reason. It is not a languid, inactive affection, but a strong, and fervent one of the heart, which glows there. It is enkindled by a view of the glory, and goodness of God, as manifested through Jesus Christ, to our race, and the individual who beholds it. This view includes the apprehension of the power, and severity of God, for every attribute must fall into the same mental focus, in order to produce a proper, and an abiding result.

It is in consequence of this influence, that we in a thousand instances desire, and shun objects in direct opposition to our passions, and appetites. Every wise man, for example, shuns indolence of thought, dissipation, and the forbidden indulgence of his senses, and passions; and every good man makes it the leading business of his life to restrain, and govern his sensuality, avarice, and ambition, by the law of his God. These are the leading enemies against which every christian comes on his spiritual warfare; and the weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to

the pulling down of strong holds. For though he wars *in* the flesh, he does not war *after*, but *against* the flesh, casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. The world has snares, and we have tastes, passions, and carnal imaginations, which lead us into these snares; and it is through our sensuality, avarice, and ambition, that satan's temptations prevail. When he tried his utmost art upon our Lord, he addressed himself to his senses, appetites, and passions. He was hungry, and he offered him food. He was not ignorant of the hardship of poverty—the Son of man hath not where to lay his head; nor insensible of reproach, and the vile calumnies with which his holy life was loaded; and, therefore, satan offered him all the kingdoms of the world, with their wealth, their power, and their glory. But, notwithstanding our blessed Lord had a taste, and appetite for food, being hungry; and for property, being distressingly poor, and dependant; and for glory, being reproached and reviled; this was the proof, and essence of his holiness, that he refused a compliance with his taste, his appetite, and his passions, and willed, or chose, in opposition to their cravings, obedience to the law, or conformity to the will of God: and as his life was governed by this will or choice, so it was his constant desire to keep the law, and please his God—*this, therefore, was his affection*. He had set his mind, and affections on things above, and not on things below. He was perfectly holy. This holy life, thus exhibited in our world, was designed as an example for our race to follow, and the christian, formed on the same model, sets his affections on things above, and not on things below, and, therefore, serves God with newness of life. His mind is deeply affected by the will of his God, and the desire to please him; compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, he lays aside every weight (that is, his appetites, and passions) and the sin which doth so easily beset him, (that is, his ruling passion, or predominant lust) and runs with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus the author, and finisher of his faith, who for the joy that is set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame. Our Saviour was neither insensible to shame, nor to suffer-

ing, but for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame. These remarks will give us an easy solution of the question, in what does the difference between passion, and affection consist? Passions are that fervor, or earnestness of desire with which we pursue the objects of sense, and sensual imagination. By the objects of sense are excited lusts, carnal appetites, or fleshy indulgences; which the imagination, influenced by sense, &c. clothes with undue attractions, and thereby excites avarice, and ambition, with the numerous tribe of secondary passions which arise from them, as anger, wrath, malice, revenge, fraud, violence, &c. none of which exist in the mind without competition, or opposition of interest or pursuit. That the objects of avarice, and ambition are creatures of the imagination, or derive their power of attraction from the misrepresentations, and decorations of the imagination, as do all other lustful objects, is evident from this, that the more we employ our understanding, *regulated by a right rule* in examining them (I mean wealth, honour, &c.) and especially when we contrast them with the approbation of God, and the happiness of heaven, the less value they appear to have, and the more absurd, and foolish the inordinate pursuit of them, and the more necessary the restraining, mortifying, and subjecting them to the law of God. In short, the passions are the mere effect of the imposition of the imagination, on the understanding—for whenever the understanding compares them, examines their nature, tendencies, relations, and consequences, (if the understanding uses, as the rule of judgment, the law of God) the imposition is detected, and the reason or necessity of restraining, governing, and even mortifying them is the more apparent. The objects of the affections are not so. They are purely intellectual. We could not know, even by revelation, that there is a God, or that he is good, holy, just, or true; or the reverse; only as we are *rational creatures*, and exercise our reason in receiving, considering, and digesting the things revealed, and the real value, useful, and happy tendency, and benevolent effect of the attributes, and gracious government of God. The more we learn of them, study them, and acquaint ourselves with them in their nature, tendency,

and effect, the more we esteem, love, and desire them; and the more we esteem, admire, and adore that God, in whom they dwell in infinite fulness, and perfection. It is through their influence upon the mind, as explained, and established by revelation, that their excellence is perceived, and felt; and it is through the excellence thus perceived, and felt by the understanding that the beneficence of God, the infinite fulness, and perfection of all goodness, &c. which dwell in him. are perceived as far as the capacity of the mind for such discernment extends. The understanding having made the comparison, (realizing the vanity, and vexation of spirit, the pain, and sorrow, and even death itself, to which all things sublunary expose us, and by which the force of passion, and lust is broken) prefers, the will chooses, and the affections are set upon the approbation of God, and the gifts of his grace, in preference to the gratification of sense, or lust, or the passions, primary or secondary. The means, therefore, of cherishing those affections, are reading God's word, meditation, prayer, signing praises to God, &c. and for this purpose the ordinances of divine worship are established, to lead us to *these mental exercises*, to call out our minds, our thoughts, understandings, and affections to be engaged upon these great subjects; to confirm, and establish our will by the law of God, and our affections upon his love, goodness, and mercy. The direct road to strengthen the passions, and appetites, is to suffer these things to get out of the view of the mind by neglect, or the careless performance of the duties of religion, that is, by neglecting to exercise our thoughts in meditation, and our understandings in comparing the value of these great objects with carnal indulgences, and the gratification of passions, which incur the displeasure of God, and the pains of his law. The *passions*, I suppose, are so called because they arise from the imposition men suffer from their imaginations when they are said to be in a passion. We never think a man in a passion when he is desirous of the indulgence of an appetite, or the acquisition of the objects of ambition or avarice, agreeably to the dictates of sober reason. Wealth, and reputation are objects of rational desire, and may be wisely desired, and sought: but in that

case we never attribute the pursuit to passion. We never call him an avaricious or ambitious man. We only call by the name of passion unreasonable fervor, and the disproportionate eagerness with which we pursue those objects; as when we pursue them with hurry of thought, confusion, and undue emotion, and make improper sacrifices to acquire them, as the sacrifice of our real improvement, of moderate ease, and rest, or of truth, honour, justice, &c. All these are cases in which we plainly *suffer* imposition or hardship by it.—It is therefore properly called passion. The affections which we are required to set on things above are very different—as they arise from sober thought, and contemplation of things invisible through their representation by the Spirit of God by revelation; and as their objects are infinite, they can never rise too high, or exceed the dictates of sober reason; nor will their fluctuations be capricious, and unaccountable, like the changing wind; they will generally bear a direct proportion to the meditation, reflection, and indeed all the other operations of the mind upon the objects of faith, which we exercise in the duties, and ordinances of divine appointment. But the passions may mingle with them, and are often mistaken for them—they burn with most fervor when blown into a flame by vanity, and presumption: as when they fancy God has honoured them with a special visit, distinguished them with peculiar marks of favour, and conferred upon them the exclusive powers of *seeing*, *tasting*, and *knowing* divine things in a way quite distinct from what is common to christians, and open to all. The majority of such cases issue in the subject becoming presumptuous, proud, party spirited, harsh, and contempuous; impatient of contradiction, reproof or instruction. The passions can never mingle themselves as such with the religious affections, nor issue in the way above described, unless the mind has so far mistaken the principles, and character of christianity as to make them subservient to animal sensation as a *primary* effect of it, or to nervous excitements, instead of being designed for intellectual, and moral exercises, and through them, the government of corporeal desires, &c. No other religion in the world is suited, by its principles and objects, and their necessary influences upon the mind, to in-

spire a universality of benevolence, and charity, together with the subjugation of the passions, and to excite the affections, but the christian religion. There is no part of man, in all his variety of character, nor is there any situation in which we can be placed, which the christian religion will not make better, and more perfect; and all this, too, without any opposition or competition of interest to any other person; so far from that, one of the leading principles of the christian religion, is, that the happiness of one person is increased by the happiness of another. A wish for the happiness, and perfection of all mankind, is one of the necessary consequences of this religion in the heart. God, who is the great fountain of all goodness, and perfection, and from whom, through Jesus Christ, flows every blessing, and blessed promise, fills the soul with his glory, and necessarily awakens a desire that our fellow creatures should partake of so divine a felicity. These are the exercises of the mind upon spiritual subjects by faith, in which the passions, (which are sensual,) have no concern, except in a *subordinate*, and *remote* degree; we cannot tell what effect they have in giving activity to the mind, and interest in its exercises, even upon divine things. None of the appetites of human nature are evil in themselves; they only become so by *governing* the life instead of being subject to the obedience of faith.

It is not the design of devotion to change the divine mind, but our own, and to establish it upon the will of God, and Gospel of Jesus Christ. We live by faith, and not by sight—this faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. In the language of the poet,

“The want of sight, faith well supplies,
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she flies,
And brings eternal glories near.

’Tis by the faith of joys to come
We walk through deserts dark as night,
Till we arrive at heaven our home,
Faith is our guide, and faith our light.”

WATTS.

**“Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock, blind nature cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore.
Death’s terror is the mountain faith removes,
That mountain barrier between man and peace.
’Tis faith disarms destruction, and absolves
From every clamorous charge the guiltless tomb.”**

YOUNG.

CHAPTER III.

Enthusiasm.

“To judge the spirits whether they are of God, we must antecedently judge our own spirit whether it be of reason, and sound sense; whether it be fit to judge at all by being sedate, cool, and impartial; free from every biasing passion, every giddy notion, or bigotted opinion. This is the first knowledge, and previous judgment—to understand ourselves, and know what spirit we are of. Afterwards we may judge the spirit of others; consider what their personal merit is, and prove the validity of their testimony by the solidity of their brain, and purity of their heart.” These are the sentiments of a piercing genius of the last century. When the mind is taken up in the contemplation of its own feelings, when under religious fervours or transports, arising from mental exercises upon divine subjects, and is taught previously to believe in the immediate operations of the Spirit by physical power, and names the feelings so, they become at once exalted by *name*, into the character of the Spirit’s own immediate, personal operations. The heathen, before the coming of Christ, had their fancied inspirations. It was not less common amongst the Latins than the Greeks. There were persons who were said to have seen some species of divinity, and to have felt the immediate operations which threw them into such transports as overcame their reason. These *ecstasies* expressed themselves outwardly in quakings, tremblings, tossings of the head, and limbs, agitations, and (as Livy, who lived before the time of Christ, calls them,) fanatical throws, or convulsions. No poet can do any thing great in his own way without some fancied inspiration. Even Lucretius makes use of inspiration when he writes against it. He first raises an apparition in a divine form, to emulate, and conduct him in his very work of degrading every thing that is divine.

Atheism itself is not exempt from enthusiasm; for, as some have remarked, there have been *enthusiastic atheists*. Our Saviour knew too well the existence of this principle in the human mind, and the sad effects of it, when left to regulate, and determine the truth in the affairs of religion, to place any reliance upon it. So far from that, he often argues both with his disciples, and his adversaries as with reasonable men on the principles of reason. Without this faculty, he well knew they could not be susceptible of either religion, or law; and without its proper exercise they would be as apt to believe error as truth. He argued from prophecy, and the conformity of the event with the prediction. He argued from the testimony of John the Baptist, who was generally acknowledged to be a prophet. He argued from the miracles which he himself performed, as incontrovertible evidence that God almighty operated by him, and sent him. He expostulates with his enemies for not using their reason on the subject: Why, said he, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? In like manner we are called upon by the Apostles of our Lord to act the part of wise men, and judge impartially of what they say. Those who do so are highly commended for the candour, and prudence they discover in an affair of so great consequence. Acts 17. 11. We are even commanded to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason for our hope. 1 Pet. 3. 15. And earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude 3. Without any aid from secret, unintelligible, and incommunicable feelings, and *supposed* operations, God has given demonstrative evidence, in clear, and distinct propositions, in his word, and its practical connexion with the mind, its powers, and operations, and the external circumstances, and internal condition of the human frame, sufficient to confirm the wavering, to convince the impartial, and dispassionate, to silence the gainsayer, and to render inexcusable the infidel, and atheist. This evidence, it is our *duty* (and of course we have a capacity) to examine, and to permit our belief to go no farther than it justifies. We must prove all things, as we are most expressly commanded by holy writ, if we would ever hope to hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. 5. 21.

Enthusiasm is the delusion of a mind falsely supposing itself under the *immediate* inspiration of God. It disqualifies the mind for the use of ordinances, for intellectual, and moral purposes, and refuses to the word of God the instrumental agency of communicating the knowledge of invisible, and spiritual things to it. It denies that the entrance of God's word giveth light; that it giveth understanding to the simple—that it is the mean through which the Spirit of God communicates the things of God.

Enthusiasm is the peculiar engine of satan, by which he does most harm. He first operated upon the imagination of our first parents to sin against God; and since the establishment of the Gospel dispensation, he advances his own kingdom by passing the delusions of imagination for the dictates of the Holy Ghost. He has many ways of tempting man to sin: but, if any please him most, it is when these delusions of imagination, and feelings are taken for the inspirations of the Spirit of God. It is the effect of enthusiasm in the mind to make those delusions the test, and rule of truth—the standard of orthodoxy: then with conscientious sincerity, every man's experience is to be squared by it—like the iron bed of Percustes, it is to be lopped or stretched as the standard requires. Out of this delusion arises an abundant crop of such fruit as is agreeable to the parent stock above described; a multiplicity of denominations springing up, and with the strange fire with which each warms their devotions, they would consume one another. Amongst such, the great test of christianity, which inspiration has established in the scriptures, seems, by common consent, to be regarded as spurious, viz. "by this ye shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Neither pray I for these (the immediate disciples) alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Enthusiasm having established the rule, the conscience feels very easy, and really sincere in obeying it. It was with an eye to this character of the human mind, that

Christ told his disciples that “the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” This prediction was not only verified in the death of the Apostles, but in the martyrdoms, in many succeeding ages, of the true christians, which were executed in the name of Jesus Christ.

They who are not made wise by the word of God, and would yet be doing great things in an extraordinary character, are in danger of the evil spirit, who has ever taken advantage of that zeal which is without knowledge, and turns it to his own purposes.

Enthusiasm proceeds from ignorance of the scriptures, as well as their design, and use. The regular way to true piety is by knowledge. There is no real enthusiasm until we are taken off from the word of God, and have assumed some other principle of knowledge.

Not understanding rightly the means of grace, or thinking them below their attention, they claim the grace of God without means, and wait as for the blowing of the wind; and, indeed, should they use the means, they do it with an eye to immediate physical operations; which, being contrary to his will, who hath appointed an inward, and outward religion, accommodated both to the soul, and body of man, it is not strange if they get something else instead of it. Enthusiasm affects great, and extraordinary fervors of devotion, above the measure of other men; and discourages the piety of sober christians, as formal, and lifeless. The proof of its pretensions being not in its fruits, but in its feelings, which are evidence only to the person himself; it refuses to be brought to a trial, and so is above conviction. And, if submitted to the test, there is scarcely any trait of resemblance between it, and the standard rule prescribed by God himself. An enthusiast is not obliged to answer any thing, having an inward testimony that he is right, and all others are wrong; and to question this is to *quench the Spirit*, and despise prophesying; so it is impossible they should be reclaimed. If pressed a little hard upon the subject, they take refuge in the declaration of Christ to Nicodemus, “the wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye *hear* the sound thereof,” &c. But no sound can be described as having been

heard, which had a *distinction in it*, and by which the information of the things of God were communicated to the understanding. The affectation of superior austerity is one mark of enthusiasm, and by which deceivers impose upon mankind. The Montanists, in the first centuries, despised the Catholics as a carnal people, because they themselves ostentatiously practised greater mortification, and severity. As to convulsions, roarings, dancings, ravings, and falling senseless to the ground, &c. these were formerly the marks of a demoniac, not of the Spirit of Christ, which is first pure, then peaceable. Enthusiasm has no principle but imagination, and nervous feeling, to which it commits itself: and when there is no rule but fancy, and impulse, every thing a man does is right, and he can think himself in the exaltation of charity, when he is in the gall of bitterness. He rises to a sphere above others, from whence he looks down upon them with disdain, which he calls piety. From a loose, idle, and disorderly life, he is converted without repentance, and commences teacher without knowledge. He despises the necessary labour of study. While forty years were requisite to form an *Andrews*; an ordinary person, if a gifted enthusiast, shall be far beyond him in a few days.

Enthusiasm has been the root of the greatest evils that have befallen the christian church. From this alone originated the Popish legends of the saints, which have been used as instruments in the hands of evil-minded persons, to induce others to reject the belief of the real miracles of Christ, and his apostles. Extraordinary inspirations, and immediate agencies of the Spirit are not to be credited, unless vouchsafed by miracles which God always sent to attest an extraordinary commission, and doctrine—and if they are pretended to come from him and do not, they must come from a spirit of error. Enthusiasts have no principles; they have no will but their own fancy; which is strongest in madmen; and this they mistake for inspiration, and then their madness is at the height:—it is as inconstant as the wind, for they can promise themselves nothing for an hour together. Enthusiasm is an art by which we impose upon ourselves, and others. It is said that a man may tell a lie until he comes to believe it himself; a strong enthusiastic habit

may fix a man's thoughts upon a favourite, and beloved object, till it dazzles his understanding, and glares so in his sight, that the worst absurdities will go down, and the highest blasphemy obtain the character of piety, and devotion. It is a fatal mistake of the soul, and generally irrevocable when it falls in love with its own disease. In a *calenture** the unhappy patient mistakes an unfathomable ocean for a pleasant field; as an enthusiast mistakes presumption, and blasphemy for holy contemplation, and humility; which, in effect, is mistaking hell itself for heaven. So writes the great Bishop Horn. The causes of enthusiasm being known, the cure is made easy. If enthusiasm arises from ignorance of the scripture, and of its use, and design, let the scripture be studied, as it is in truth, and indeed the word of God; not with an expectation of an immediate physical act, but with a view of learning divine truth, and, by its evidences, of believing it—of learning the character of God, and his purposes as manifested in, and by Jesus Christ; with a view of learning what has been, what is, and what will be the operations of the Spirit, and power of God; what are the covenant relations of man; what in the first, and what in the second Adam—what his future destiny, and how determined—thus using the word of God as the light by which mental vision is produced upon spiritual subjects, by which those things which are not seen by sense are looked at, and which things alone are eternal, and known only to be so by the will of God who governs them all, being revealed by his Spirit through his word. There is nothing *necessarily* existent but God. What he wills to be, exists on account of that will, and his power exerted in pursuance of it. What he wills, he does not by necessity, but by choice; and it is by the revelation of that choice to us that we know the future designs of God with respect to us, and our world. The most effectual way of preventing, and curing enthusiasm, is to believe no proposition true but by the evidence which supports it in religion, and never to yield a greater measure of assent than the proof will justify; he who does (as Locke observes) exceed this limit, it is plain receives not the truth

* *A calenture is a burning fever peculiar to sailors.*

for truth's sake, but for some other bye-end. For the evidence that any proposition is true, lying only in the proofs a man has of it; whatsoever degree of assent he affords it beyond the degrees of that evidence, it is plain all that surplussage of assurance is owing to some other affection, and not to the love of truth; it being as impossible that the love of truth should make me assent to any proposition for the sake of that evidence which it has not that it is true, as that I would love it as truth because it is false. A further, and an essential mean of curing enthusiasm, and promoting religion, is the study of one's own mind, by which the passions, and imaginations; the feelings, and affections, &c. will be distinguished from the immediate operations of the Spirit, and they will not be further regarded than as *effects* flowing from mental exercises upon religious subjects; and, when thus received, they never can be so conceived of, named, and fostered, as to issue in not only disorder, but frantic madness, and bitter persecution. If they are by misapprehension, called the immediate operations of the Spirit, they are at once exalted into the divinity, and he who would correct the errors arising out of this *misnomer* by correcting this misuse of terms, is charged with the sin against the Holy Ghost, or some other dreadful impiety. It is very rare, that persons thus labouring under a delusion as to the proper nature, and character of their feelings, which they improperly attribute to the immediate operations of the Spirit, are not greatly defective in their views of the depravity of human nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They rarely ever manifest that tender concern, and christian solicitude for the salvation of their poor fellow creatures, unless towards those who enlist under their banner, or profess a devotedness to their singular ideas, and notions. They scarcely ever receive a brother weak in the faith, but to doubtful disputation; unless he has the virtue of passive obedience, and a blind acquiescence. In short, instead of manifesting the *fruits* of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, with the crucifixion of the fleshly lusts; they manifest too evidently the works of the flesh, such as hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, &c.; disputing about

their own peculiar explanations of scriptures, rather than going on to perfection in the unity of the Spirit, and the bonds of peace, working out their salvation with fear, and trembling.

I cannot better conclude this Chapter than with an extract from the Spectator, vol. 3. pp. 121. 124.

“A state of temperance, sobriety, and justice, without devotion, is a cold, lifeless, insipid condition of virtue; and is rather to be styled philosophy than religion. Devotion opens the mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more sublime ideas, than any that are to be met with in the most exalted science; and at the same time warms, and agitates the soul more than sensual pleasure.

“There is not a more melancholy object, than a man who has his head turned with religious enthusiasm. A person that is crazed, though with pride or malice, is a sight very mortifying to human nature; but when the distemper arises from any indiscreet fervours of devotion, or too intense an application of the mind to its *mistaken* duties, it deserves our compassion in a more particular manner. We may however learn this lesson from it, that since devotion itself (which one would be apt to think could not be too warm) may disorder the mind, unless its heats are tempered with caution and prudence, we should be particularly careful to keep our reason as cool as possible, and to guard ourselves in all parts of life against the influence of passion, imagination, and constitution.

“Devotion, when it does not lie under the check of reason, is very apt to degenerate into enthusiasm. When the mind finds herself very much inflamed with her devotions, she is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up by something divine within her. If she indulges this thought too far, and humors the growing passion, she at last flings herself into imaginary raptures, and ecstasies.

“Nothing is so glorious in the eyes of mankind, and ornamental to human nature, setting aside the infinite advantages which arise from it, as a strong, steady, masculine piety; but enthusiasm and superstition are that weakness of human reason, that expose us to the scorn and derision of infidels, and sink us even below the beasts that perish.”

CHAPTER IV.

Decrees.

What I design in this Chapter, is more to shew the absurdity, and mischief of theorising upon the secret things of God, in respect to his decrees, than to exhibit a theory of my own. The first Chapter, and, indeed, I might say all the succeeding ones, prove an absolute necessity for a revelation, in order to *know* the existence of God. The human mind is under at *least* as strong a necessity for an explicit revelation of the *will* of God, in order to learn his future purposes, as it is to learn that he is.

In every instance of human investigation into infinite, and unsearchable subjects, in which we cannot have divine revelation to aid, and direct our researches, and to lead our minds by the plain, and positive declarations of God, all our speculations must be involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, and error. In contemplating the essential nature, and operations of beings infinitely removed from us, and in exploring the wonders of a state wisely concealed from the knowledge of mortals, we naturally run into the most outrageous violation of truth, and probability. We apply the measure of time, and the proportions of form to that which is in its own nature eternal, and immaterial; and we allot the senses, and passions of men to beings who cannot possibly have occasion for them. It is, indeed, the inevitable mistake of the human mind, to carry the imperfections which cleave to humanity into the idea it forms of the divinity. We are overwhelmed amidst the immensity of our conceptions, and persisting to affix finite ideas to infinite objects, at the same time heedless that eternity cannot be partitioned out into intervals, we assign, for a day of the Almighty, a period of a thousand years, and we think that we

magnify his being, and power, by uttering such absurd jargon. It must be acknowledged, that, in the holy scriptures, the Supreme Deity is often represented as invested with the form, and as agitated by the passions of men; the Eternal, whom no line can circumscribe, nor period bound, who is *being* simply considered in, and of himself, to whom nothing of assignable forms, colours, or qualities, attach; the uncaused cause of every thing; a being who has no relation to time, not being older to-day than he was yesterday, nor younger to-day than he will be to-morrow; who has no relation to space, not being a part here, and a part there, or a whole any where; whose circumference is no where, and whose centre is every where; I say, it must be acknowledged that this being sometimes condescends to speak of himself in a manner with strictness only applicable to temporal, and finite beings; but all this is done in pure compassion to the weakness of our limited comprehensions. We, on this account, should be exceedingly cautious not to mistake the language of occasional parable, and similitude, intended as an accommodation to weak, sensual, human intellects, for solemn asseveration, and decisive avowal. Our incapacity is no less manifest in our attempts to scan the œconomy of heaven, as it consists in the *real*, and *essential* government of God in our world, as it is in itself, than in attempting to comprehend infinity. To form a theory or a system of the government of God, correct, and harmonious in all its parts, requires a knowledge co-extensive, and commensurate with the *essential nature*, and *relations of things, visible and invisible*; knowledge short of this must expose a system-maker of decrees, who attempts the work, to perpetual blunders, and contradictions: and the impiety, and profanity of resolving these errors, and contradictions into the sovereignty of God, is too evident to need remark. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29. 29. Reason has nothing that it can object to this order of things, for it is dependant upon revelation for all that it knows, and it is an act of great impiety to arraign the Deity for not having communicated to man more upon

the subject of things, which were otherwise unknown, than by revelation, he has in his lapsed state. To say that any thing is *supernatural*, (as is the nature, and existence of spiritual beings to man) is only saying that it is something which, by the necessity of our own nature, we are as incapable of knowing, *as it is*, as we are incapable of seeing *spirits*. If, therefore, supernatural, and divine things be ever revealed to us, their *nature*, as it is, cannot possibly be revealed to us; that is, they cannot be revealed to us as they are in their *own nature*; for, if they could, such things would not be supernatural, but such as were suited to our capacities. If an angel could appear to us, as it is in its own nature, then we should be *naturally* capable of seeing angels; but, because our nature is not *capable* of such a sight, and angels being supernatural objects; therefore, when angels appear to men, they must appear in some *human* or *corporeal* form, that their appearance may be suited to our capacities. It is just thus, when any *supernatural* or divine matter is revealed by God, it can no more possibly be revealed to us, as it is in its *own nature*, than an angel can appear to us to make itself visible by us, as it is in its own nature: but such supernatural matter can only be revealed to us by being represented to us by description. Thus revelation teaches us this supernatural matter, that Jesus Christ is making perpetual intercession for us in heaven. For Christ's real state or manner of existence with God in heaven, in regard to individuals, or his church, cannot, as it is in its *own nature*, be described to us, it is, in this respect, *ineffable*, and *incomprehensible*; and, therefore, it is revealed to us under an idea which gives us the truest representation of it that we are capable of; which, however, falls entirely short of that hypostatical relation, as it is. If any one, from the revelation of the intercession of Christ in heaven, should infer that the Son of God must, therefore, either be always upon his knees in acts of *mental* or *vocal* prayer; or *prostrate* in some humble form of a supplicant, he would make a very weak inference. Because this revealed idea of Christ, as a perpetual intercessor in heaven, is only a comparative representation of something that cannot be *directly* known, as it is in its own nature, and only

teaches us how to believe something, though imperfectly, yet truly, and usefully of an *incomprehensible* matter: just as our own ideas of *wisdom*, and goodness do not teach us what the divine wisdom, and goodness are, in their *own natures*; but only help us to believe something *truly*, and usefully, of those perfections of God which are in themselves inconceivable by us. There is no inferring any thing from these ideas, by which divine, and supernatural things are represented to us, only the *truth*, and *certainty* of that *likeness* under which they are represented.

With respect to the *manner*, and *nature* of God's decrees, our ideas of them as they are in themselves, fall as intirely short of the truth as our knowledge of the principle of volition in the divine mind are short of the truth. The relations of things, and persons visible, and invisible, and the fitness resulting from thence are, the rule of God's actions, and it is upon this principle that God must act according to his *own nature*; and therefore nothing could be fit for God to do, or worthy of him, but what had the reason of its fitness in his own nature; and if so, then the rule of his actions could not fall within our *comprehension*; and consequently reason cannot be a competent judge of God's proceedings, and all plans of his decrees which are not *revealed* must fall as short of the truth, as does the comprehension of the human mind of adequate ideas of the *eternal*, *immutable*, and essential nature, and relations of things, as they are in the divine mind. To ask the reason or foundation of any one of the divine attributes, is the same as asking the reason or foundation of them all—and to seek for the reason or foundation of all the divine attributes is seeking for the *cause* of God's existence. The nature, and reason of things considered *independently* of the divine will or *without* it, have no more *obligation* in them than a *divine worship* considered independently of, and without any regard to the *existence* of God. For the will of God is as absolutely necessary to found all *moral* obligation upon, as the existence of God is necessary to be the foundation of religious worship—and the fitness of *moral obligation*, without the *will* of God, is only like the fitness of *religious* worship without the existence of God. No man has even yet been

able to reconcile the decrees of God as consisting in the pre-determination of sinful acts, and the execution of that decree by the agency of man as the necessary cause of it, without involving the immoral consequence of man's unaccountability. The secret of all the errors upon this subject seems to be, that men are not contented to stop short of knowing the secret things of God; and, although they are compelled to do so, they persist to draw consequences predicated upon that knowledge, which are, however, as contradictory to many plain truths revealed as if they had been drawn from the principles of the Alcoran, and pressed into the service of the christian religion. The vain abstractions, and philosophical jargon upon this subject have served no end of true religion; but only helping people to wrangle, and dispute away that sincere obedience to God which is their only happiness. I should not object to any theory of decrees were it unproductive of ill practical consequences. The design, and purposes of God, I have no doubt, are vast, and variegated, infinitely beyond my conception; but that share of reason by which alone I could pretend to know or judge any thing about this stupendous plan is so small, and I enjoy it in so imperfect a manner, that I can scarce think or talk intelligibly of it, or so much as define the faculties of my reasoning. As the existence of God, as such, necessarily implies the existence of all perfection; so the will of God as such, necessarily implies the willing every thing, that all perfection can will. As the existence of God according to his revelations of himself, and our own experience, contains all perfection, cannot for that reason have any external causes; so the will of God, because it is all *perfection*, cannot, for that reason, have any external *rule*, or *direction*; but his own will is wisdom, and his wisdom is his will; his goodness is arbitrary, and his arbitrariness is goodness. My great concern is to cast myself implicitly upon God, being thus good, and perfect, and to bear in mind the powers or faculties he has given me, and the obligations he has placed me under for using, and cultivating them in his service, trembling at his word, and yielding obedience to his authority. God has no more given us our reason, and a revelation to *settle* the *secret* order of his government, or to find out his secret will,

and to form a theory of his decrees upon, which destroy the responsibility of his moral agents, then he has given us *senses*, and *appetites* to taste the nature or discover the ingredients of *future happiness*. I should not oppose, nor say any thing about the opinions of religious men concerning the decrees of God, were I not convinced that a *particular* view of them which seems to be current is one great cause of indifference to, and often of the rejection of the Gospel. I do not pretend to deny *God's decrees*, but rest upon them for my salvation. They are not only the rock of the christian's safety, but, according to my apprehension of them, they afford the strongest encouragement, and most irresistible inducements to sinners to believe in Jesus Christ, and flee from the wrath to come. The decree is, "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." I only deny the DIVINE, DECREE OF MEN, or the systems of their *divising* as applicable to the government of God. All that I would desire from any denomination of religion is merely that they should not use their theories of decrees, and the operations God's Spirit to the perversion of the practical designs of christianity, and to cheat men out of their souls. It would be uncharitable beyond the feelings of my heart, to charge any people with a *design* so wicked; the consequences however are not less fatal. Men are often honest in the wrong. The idea which I have so often mentioned in its common acceptation, relative to the operations of the Spirit in regeneration, is the one upon which the theory of decrees is built, which prevent the practical influence of the christian religion, in a more enlarged, ennobled, and truly divine sense, upon individuals, society, and even government; as they contradict the plain meaning, and design of the Gospel upon intelligent moral beings. How different are the following passages of scripture? *Now is the time, this is the day of salvation*"—unto whom? unto those to whom the Gospel is preached. "The commandment which I command thee this day it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, it is not in heaven that thou shouldst say who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us that we may hear it, and do it; neither is it beyond the sea that thou shouldst say who shall go over the sea for us,

and bring it for us that we may hear, and do it? *But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart that thou may do it.*” “See I have set before thee this day a blessing, and a curse; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day—and a curse if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord. I have not spoken in secret, in dark places of the earth, I said not unto the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else, I have sworn by myself, the word hath gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, &c. Put away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die O house of Isreal; for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. Say unto them as I live saith the Lord God I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.” I ask whether it is fair or honest dealing towards God for men to devise *evasions*, and equivocations by which to break the literal force, and truth of these declarations? Does the commission which Christ gave to his disciples authorise such devices?

Mahomet seems to have had no little use for the doctrine of *decrees*, and God's sovereignty, in the propagation of his religion, which have prevailed, in a very high degree, amongst several religious christian denominations; and, what is very remarkable, is, that the very arguments which are now used as an excuse for not urging the Gospel upon its own evidence, and in favour of *waiting* for physical operations, was a most prominent one with the *False Prophet*. A great writer, of the last century, observes, “There is no subject he (Mahomet) more frequently recurs to in his Alcoran” (than that of miracles) “being greatly interested to remove the doubts which were raised in the minds of many by his disclaiming the working miracles; a power which till then had ever been looked upon as the prerogative of the prophets. The demands and reasonings of his opposers in regard to miracles harrassed him very much. They assured him by the most solemn oaths, and protestations, that

they would submit implicitly to his guide in religion if he would once gratify them in this particular. To avoid this paramount test, and proof of a divine religion, and commission, and to satisfy the people on this head, the following are some of the reasons which he employed: 1st. The *sovereignty* of God, who is not to be called to account for what he gives or withholds. 2nd. The *uselessness of miracles*; because every man is *fore-ordained* either to believe, or to remain in unbelief; and this decree no miracles could alter. 3d. The *experienced inefficacy* of miracles in former times. 4th. The *mercy* of God who had denied them this evidence, because the sin of their incredulity, in case he had granted it, would have been so heinous, that he could not have respited or tolerated them any longer." Campbell on Miracles. The doctrines of *fatalists* upon the subject of the divine decrees, is not unlike that of Mahomet, except in this: Mahomet acknowledged that the means of grace neglected or rejected, aggravated the condemnation of men; whereas, those who are fatalists believe, that Gospel offers slighted, impose no aggravated condemnation, but that the condemnation of sinners proceeds from Adam's transgression. This, by a necessity of reason, and the nature of the divine œconomy, is true, if the occasional physical agencies contended for as antecedents to the faith of the Gospel, is true. There is another class of christians who believe that men have natural, and not moral ability; and that they are condemned for not using their natural powers. This seems to be an absurdity upon the first blush. There cannot be any sin in the *mere existence* of men; if there is, it proceeds from their creator, who gives them being; which no person will believe. Sin consists in *acts of disobedience*. Without light there cannot be vision, and without law there cannot be transgression. Adam transgressed, and, by transgression, incurred the penalty of death. But why was the human race preserved; why permitted still to exist after transgression? Was it not in consequence of the promised seed of the woman—was it not by virtue of a mediatorial governor, the Prince of Peace? Are men then preserved by grace, to sin against Gospel offers, and opportunities, without accountability or condemnation? Are we Gentiles to be

judged by Moses, and not by Christ? Is not the government of God, under the Jewish as well as the Gospel dispensation, a moral government, and does not the moral character of the subjects of each, take its complexion from its relation to the law, consisting either in acts of obedience or disobedience? I call the Gospel the law of faith. This law no person can know or believe in by nature—it is a divine, a supernatural proclamation of grace; and it can only be learnt in the divine, and supernatural terms in which it is made, and believed in, by the evidence which established, and supports it; being thus learnt, and believed, it confers upon man moral ability. The devils may know, and believe the Gospel, as published to our world; but that knowledge, and belief can never confer upon them moral ability to serve God, nor prepare them for *receiving* his favour; because his mercy, and blessings are not offered to them on condition of faith, and obedience. Their knowledge, and faith produce in them no more the grace of salvation, which is offered to the human race in the Gospel, nor a fitness to receive it, than the knowledge, and belief in one criminal, of a reprieve being offered to another, by receiving of which he is restored to the possession, and enjoyment of his natural, and civil rights, confer upon him to whom the reprieve was never offered those rights, and privileges. Men, and devils sustain different relations. Salvation is offered to one in the Gospel, and not to the other: and it is absurd to talk about the similarity of the faith of each as it relates to Jesus Christ. Faith in the law produces condemnation to a sinner, as it is the cause of trembling to devils. Faith in the Gospel produces justification, and life in man, and is decreed by God for this purpose; such a faith, however, does not mitigate the anguish, and trembling of devils, for the provisions of the Gospel were not designed for their benefit. King Jesus is the king of terrors to devils. Over them he reigns in dreadful justice: while he is the Prince of Peace to man, as he, through death, hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, that he might deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

In the Gospel, or gracious moral government of God, there is a no less close, and necessary connexion between cause, and effect, than there is in the natural government. Mankind are not born with spiritual knowledge or faith, nor with the dispositions, and desires which proceed from them—with love to God, and good will to man, the genuine fruits of the Spirit, which are the necessary consequences of the true faith of the Gospel in the soul, and are made so by the decrees of God's throne, according to his wisdom, his power, &c. In order to this knowledge, and faith, which lie at the bottom, and are the efficient causes of the renovation of the intellectual, and moral character of man, God has decreed, ordained, and established the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to be taught by parents, and the ministry, or "those who labour in the word, and doctrine." Upon their shoulders a most dreadful responsibility lies, as it is upon the faithful discharge of their duty, according to God's decree, that the knowledge of him through Jesus Christ, is communicated by his word, "for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that" (or this affair, namely, your salvation through faith,) "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Eph. 2. 8.; "therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Rom. 4. 16. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with or by the word of truth." James 1. 17—18. This faith cometh by hearing the word of God. Rom. 10. 17. God purifieth the heart by faith. Acts 15. 9. This is the wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or wranglings, and without hypocrisy. James 3. 17. It was on account of these vast consequences, resulting from the faith of the Gospel to individuals, and society, that Paul felt, and expressed in such emphatic terms, his high sense of responsibility in the discharge of his duty in preaching the Gospel with faithfulness in its simplicity, and truth; he observes, that "necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." 1 Corinth. 9. 16. Were christian denominations to realize, that it is by the faithful,

and practical preaching, and teaching of the Gospel, as the mean, according to the decrees of God, that the world is to be filled with the knowledge of him, and that righteousness, and peace are to fill the earth, they would have little inclination to spend their time in unprofitable disputation about the secret things of God; or to make mankind believe that the scriptures are a sealed book or a dead letter.

I cannot conclude this chapter without bestowing a few remarks upon Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which is more frequently relied on to prove the notions of election, which exist amongst Antinomians, and Fatalists than any other part of Scripture. A more singular perversion of scriptural authority was never made, than the use to which Paul's Epistle to the Romans in respect to God's decrees evince. That Epistle was written to refute the same ideas about decrees which were entertained by the Jewish christians, that it is now brought to support. The errors, and vain disputes concerning faith, and works, justification, and sanctification, election, and reprobation, &c. which have so long vexed, and distracted the minds of christians, have all arisen from one grand mistake of applying to themselves, or other particular persons, now certain phrases or passages which plainly referred to the THEN state, and condition, not of particular persons, but of whole churches when the Epistle was written. Perplexed, and puzzled with these knotty points, many well meaning christians have either been drawn aside from paying a due regard to those moral, and weighty exhortations, which are most easy to be understood, and of infinite obligation to be put in practice; or they have been driven to distraction, and despair by them. The same mistaken notions which some of the converted Jews formed from some of Paul's expressions, are entertained by some christians in our day, viz. the doctrine of fate, God being the author of sin, &c. which is wresting the scripture to their own distinction. For example, Rom. 1. 28. where it is said, that God *delivered* the Gentiles to a *reprobate mind*. Rom. 7. 17. *It is no more I, who work it out, but sin dwelling in me*. Rom. 9. 19. Whom he will, he hardeneth, ver. 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, &c.* chap. 11. 8. *And the rest are blinded as it is*

written, &c. God is said *to do* what he does not prevent, in the passages quoted. To expose the dangerous nature of the errors which the christian Jews ran into, in the use they made of Paul's expressions, and to guard the faithful against them, the Apostles Peter, and James, and John, and Jude, wrote the seven Epistles which are called Catholic. So Augustine informs us, in his treatise of faith, and good works. He observes, "A wicked opinion having sprung up, even in the
 "apostles days, by misunderstanding Paul's arguments, Pe-
 "ter, John, James, and Jude, aimed in their Epistles princi-
 "pally to this end, to vindicate the doctrine of Paul from
 "the false consequences charged upon it, and to show, that
 "faith without works is nothing worth; but indeed, Paul
 "does not speak of faith at large, but only of that living,
 "fruitful, and evangelical faith, which he himself saith, work-
 "eth by love. As for that faith void of good works, which
 "these men thought sufficient to salvation, he declareth pos-
 "itively against it." And having mentioned, that Peter says some passages of his brother Paul's epistles had been *wres-
 ted by unlearned men*, Augustine observes, "that Peter calls
 "it *wresting*, because Paul was in truth of the same opinion
 "with the other apostles, and held eternal life impossible to
 "be obtained by any faith which had not the attestation of
 "a holy life."

The decrees of God about which we ought to feel concerned, and with which we have an interest to be acquainted, and which we are in duty bound to learn, are those which are written, leaving the secret things of God with him, accommodating our mind to the circumstances, and condition under which we are placed in respect to the knowledge of divine things, and learning those things which God has revealed. In consequence of a restless, and an overcurious disposition to pry into the things of God beyond the limits which he has seen fit to prescribe, we overlook, and misapprehend many of the most important truths which he has revealed. This licentiousness of freedom of which men are guilty in their speculations about *unrevealed* divine things has led them, (to be consistent in inconsistency) to adopt a *three pound ten plan of atonement*. By curtailing the death of Jesus Christ, of its infinite merit in the mediatorial govern-

ment, and connecting with it their particular notions of decrees, together with the immediate physical agency of the Spirit in order to faith, they have destroyed every thing which appertains to God as a *moral* governor, and man as the subject of a moral government. According to these notions, the word of God has no suitability for producing the faith of the Gospel, only as it sustains the character of a mechanical instrument. This plan by a natural, and moral necessity denies that man is in a state of *gracious* probation—that the offers of salvation are, in reality, made to any by God, except those who, by the immediate physical power of the Spirit, are made to receive it; and that there is in fact no such a thing as Gospel condemnation, or accountability upon moral principles, by reason of an utter destitution of moral ability from the necessity of things under the means of grace. A wonderful Gospel this, to be sure! Such strange absurdities could never have assumed the name of christianity or been called Gospel truths, had it not have been for speculations into the divine mind, and œconomy beyond what is written. This extreme doctrine of physical fatalism, is thought to favor the idea of salvation being more entirely of grace than any other—that opinion, however, is not true—every thing which appertains to man's salvation is of grace according to the opposite opinion. It appears to me, that no theory of decrees can be just, or fall short of impiety unless it embraces the three following propositions; viz. that God is not the author of sin, either by positive agency or connivance—that he is in truth, and in deed sincere in offering the Gospel to man, and who, for the rejection of it will be condemned by it, “in the day (as Paul says,) when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.” Rom. 2. 16.

I conclude this section by observing that I believe in the decrees of God, the operations of his Spirit, and the extent of the atonement of Jesus Christ, in such a way as neither to make God the author of sin by *positive* agency, or by *permissive* acquiescence, or *connivance*; or to destroy the freedom of the human will under the dispensation of grace in which man is placed, nor to make God insincere either on account of natural or moral inability under the means of grace; and

in such a way as to subject the rejectors of the Gospel when faithfully administered, to a Gospel condemnation; and finally, so as not to exclude the operation, and agency of second causes; but rather to establish them. God is the supreme governor, and has prescribed limits to the capacities, and powers of all inferior beings whom he has made, and governs. The intellectual, and moral powers of man are restricted to those propositions, and rules of action which are submitted to him, and to which they are accommodated. The human mind cannot investigate a subject which is out of the reach of its apprehension, either by perception or deduction, and it may neglect to investigate those which are submitted to it, and thereby avoid the apprehension of those truths, by the authority of which the moral conduct of men ought to be governed. The freedom of the human will consists, perhaps more in the investigation of subjects, and in inquiring after truth, than in obeying the influence of motives. The greatest apparent good is the governing influence. This is, however, entirely relative; it takes its character in the view of the mind from the enjoyments, and the desires consequential upon it. The mind is, however, capable of acquiring such knowledge, and attaining such views of truths before unknown, as on account of the greatest apparent good, to place those things which had been previously thought of paramount importance, upon an inferior grade. This is the case when men pass from the savage to the civilized state; and from idolatry to the worship of the true God through Jesus Christ, &c. For this improvement in the human character, and its assimilation to the divine nature, is the Gospel designed, and suited.

To theorise, and guess about the decrees of God, beyond what is written, is, to say the least of it, treading upon forbidden ground. I would rather prostrate myself before the incomprehensible Jehovah, and exclaim with Paul, "Oh! the depths of the riches both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God, how *unsearchable* are his judgments, and his way *past finding out*; for who hath *known* the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his *counsellor*?" than speculate beyond his revelations.

CHAPTER V.

The origin of the division of the Scriptures into chapters, and verses, and their effects, &c.

I have thought it not uninteresting to the reader to exhibit a view of the origin of the division of the scriptures into chapters, and verses. For this purpose, I shall insert an extract from the "*British Critic*," containing the observations of the great biblical historian, Mr. Reeves:

"The subdivision of the matter of a book into small verses is peculiar to the bible; and it is the abuse of a contrivance that was designed for another purpose, the history and progress of which is worth considering.

"The sacred books, whether Hebrew or Greek, came from the pen of their writers, and were in the hands of those for whom they were originally composed, without any division of this sort. The first need of any thing like such a division was after the Babylonish captivity; the Jews had then mostly forgotten the original Hebrew; and when it was read in the Synagogue, it was found necessary to have an interpretation in the Chaldee, for the use of the common people. To make this interpretation intelligible and useful, the reader of the Hebrew used to pause at short distances, while the interpreter pronounced the same passage in Chaldee; such pauses became established, and were marked in the manuscript, forming a set of verses like those in our present Bibles. This division into verses was confined to the Hebrew Scriptures, and to the people for whose use it was contrived; no such division was made in the translation of the SEVENTY, nor in the Latin version; so that the Bible used in the Greek and the Western Churches was without any such division, either in the Old or New Testament.

“It was, however, found necessary in after times, to make a division and subdivision of the sacred books; but it was for a very different purpose; it was for the sake of referring to them with more ease and certainty. We are told, that Cardinal HUGO, in the 13th century, made a concordance to the whole of the Latin Bible, and that for this purpose of reference he divided both the Old and New Testaments into chapters, being the same that we now have. These chapters he subdivided into smaller portions, distinguishing them by the letters of the alphabet; and, by those means, he was enabled to make references from his concordance to the text of the Bible. The utility of such a concordance brought it into high repute; and the division into chapters, upon which it depended, was adopted along with it, by the divines of Europe.

“This division into chapters was afterwards, in the 15th century, adopted by a learned Jew, *for the same purpose of reference*, in making a concordance to the Hebrew Bible. This was RABBI MORDECAI NATHAN, who carried the contrivance a step further; for, instead of adhering to the subdivisions of Cardinal HUGO, he made others, much smaller, and distinguished them, not by letters, but by numbers. This invention was received into the Latin Bibles, and they make the present verses of the Old Testament. In doing this, he might possibly have proceeded upon the old subdivisions, long before used for the interpretation into Chaldee. We see, therefore, that the present division of the Old Testament into chapter and verse, was an invention partly Christian and partly Jewish, and that it was *for the sole purpose of reference, and not primarily with a view to any natural division of the several subjects contained in it.*

“The New Testament still remained without any subdivision into verses, till one was at length made, for the very same purpose of a concordance, about the middle of the 16th century. The author of this was ROBERT STEPHENS, the celebrated printer at Paris. He followed the example of RABBI NATHAN, in subdividing the chapters into small verses, and numbering them; and he printed an edition of the Greek Testament so marked. This division soon came into general use, like the former one of the Old

Testament, from the same recommendation of the concordance that depended upon it; and Latin Testaments, as well as Bibles, were ever after distinguished into chapters and verses.

“It remained for the translators of the English Bible to push this invention to an extremity. The beginning of every chapter had been made a fresh paragraph in all the printed Bibles; but the verses were only marked by the number, either in the margin, or in the body of the matter; such minute subdivisions did not then seem fit to be made into distinct paragraphs. But the English translators, who had fled to Geneva during the persecution of Queen Mary, and who published there a new translation, famous afterwards under the name of the Geneva Bible, separated every one of the verses, making each into a distinct paragraph. This new contrivance was soon received with as much approbation as the preceding; and all Bibles, in all languages, began to be printed in the same manner, with the verses distinguished into paragraphs; and so the practice has continued to the present time. A singular destiny, to which no other book has been subjected. For in all other works, the index, or concordance, or whatever may be the subsidiary, is fashioned so, as to be subordinate to the original work; but in the Bible alone, the text and substance of the work is disfigured, in order to be adapted to the concordance that belongs to it; and the notion of its being perused, is sacrificed to that of its being referred to. In consequence of this, the Bible is to the eye, upon the opening of it, rather a book of reference than a book for perusal and study; and it is much to be feared, that this circumstance makes it more frequently used as such; it is referred to for verifying a quotation, and then returned to the shelf. What book can be fundamentally understood, if consulted in such a desultory way! Those, who extend their reading, but still regulate their efforts by the chapters, are not more likely to see the scriptural writings in the true view.”

On account of those divisions, and subdivisions of Scripture, a vast multiplicity of errors have arisen. It is not enough, if we quote the words of Scripture; but, the sense

and meaning of Scripture must be produced. It is the sense and meaning of Scripture which is the Word of God, and which is to be the mean, and standard of our faith, and the rule and measure of our practice. A text may seem to mean very differently, when detached from the context, from what it signifies in connection with the preceding sentence, or when the drift of the whole passage, to which it relates, is carefully examined. Innumerable instances might be produced from the various creeds, systems, and opinions of the sects, which are multiplying every day in proof of this observation; in which the words of Scripture are brought to prove what the meaning of Scripture will never countenance.

It may not be inconsistent with the design of this chapter, to show the origin of the difference between the method of preaching in the Apostolic day, and that which followed, and obtains in a great degree in our own times; together with the origin of other peculiarities. For these purposes I will exhibit a few extracts from Church History—Moshheim, vol. 1.

“It deserves to be taken notice of here, of the third Century—that the discourses, or sermons addressed to the people were very different from those in the earliest times, &c. of the church, and degenerated much from the ancient simplicity. For not to say any thing of Origin, who introduced LONG SERMONS, and who was the first who EXPLAINED THE SCRIPTURES IN HIS DISCOURSES; several bishops who had received their education in the schools of the rhetoricians, were exactly scrupulous in adopting their public exhortations, and discourses to the rules of Grecian eloquence.” Is it not fair to conclude, that from these innovations, and explanations proceeded the first operation of creed making, and from which has evidently arisen the new, and different creeds since?

In respect to the errors of the fifth Century, the historian observes, “The sacred, and venerable simplicity of the primitive times, which required no other than *a true faith in the word of God, and a sincere obedience to his holy laws appeared little better than* RUSTICITY, and IGNORANCE *to the*

subtle doctors of this quibbling age. Many of the over curious divines, who attempted to *explain* the nature, and remove the difficulties of these intricate doctrines, succeeded very ill in this matter.

Instead of leading men into the paths of humble faith, and genuine piety, they bewildered them into the labyrinths of controversy, and contention, and rather darkened than illustrated the sacred mysteries of religion by a cloud of unintelligible subtleties, ambiguous terms, and obscure distinctions. Hence, arose new matter of animosity, and dispute; of bigotry, and uncharitableness, which flowed like a torrent through succeeding ages, and which all human efforts seem unable to vanquish. In these disputes the heat of passion, and the excessive force of religious antipathy, and contradiction, hurried frequently the contending parties into the most dangerous extremes. The doctrines of religion were at this time understood, and represented in a manner that savoured little of their native purity, and simplicity. ¶ *They were drawn out by laboured commentaries beyond the terms in which the divine wisdom had thought fit to reveal them; and were examined with that minuteness, and subtlety that were only proper to cover them with obscurity.* And what was still worse, the theological notions that generally prevailed were *proved, rather by the authorities, and logical discussions of the ancient doctors, than by the unerring dictates of the divine word.*" This seems to me to be literally true in the present age; so much so, that a better portrait cannot be drawn of it, than the one given above of the fifth Century. A single scrap of Scripture is often used as a text, and the preacher seems to be authorised to say almost what he pleases from it. Indeed, I see not the use of taking texts from the bible more than any other book, in the way that it is usually done for the purpose of preaching; *their sense, and meaning are lost, by destroying the connexion.*

CHAPTER VI.

The connexion between the American Governments, and the Christian Religion; and the dependance of the former upon the latter for their perpetuation; together with the duty of Christians in the exercise of their political rights, &c. and the consequences of neglecting them.

Observations upon politics, and government, in a work like this, may appear to many improper—it is, at least by common consent, unusual. It has been a received opinion, too long for the interests of truth, and the happiness of mankind, (and, to the great discredit of christianity, amongst its professors,) that the christian religion, and civil governments have no connexion, in the nature of things, with each other. So far from any affinity existing between them, it is thought that they ought never to be blended, even in disquisition. I grant that the true principles of christianity, and a government bottomed upon fraud, and violence, have no connexion. But so far from a republican government, which embraces, by its principles, and in its provisions, the rights of man, and secures the happiness of society, existing *independent* of christianity, that it cannot, from the necessity of things, exist at all without it. The sentiment, amongst the christian part of society, of the separate and independent existence of the American governments, of christianity, must have arisen either from inattention to, or misapprehension of, the real character of christianity as revealed, of its design, and use, of human nature, as it is without the knowledge, and influence of christianity, or from the many abuses which have been made of revealed religion by being blended with civil authority. In the latter case, it has ever been an engine of oppression, and the most bloody persecutions have grown

out of it. Those who have never investigated the intrinsic nature of revealed religion, and its relation to the human mind, and suitableness for enlarging its store of knowledge, and of imparting information upon subjects of the first importance, and by which it appears that man sustains a quite different relation from any which he could possibly have thought of without, reject it on account of the evils which its abuses have produced.

A fact, within the recollection of many of my readers, has operated in producing a like opinion of the want of connection between religion, and government, amongst many of the denomination called Baptists, in the state of Virginia. Under the law establishing the Church of England, the Baptist brethren, about half a century ago, were most violently persecuted. The enemies of christianity availed themselves of this circumstance, and induced the persecuted christians to believe that the christian religion had no more to do with civil government, than government has with physics or geometry. This is the language of the law securing religious freedom. It is true, that the christian religion has never flourished in the embraces of civil authority; and, although it would not be more absurd for an earthly legislature to pass a law establishing the sun as the great fountain of natural light, than by law to coerce the christian religion, yet it is equally true, that the federal, and state governments of the United States are as necessarily dependant upon the christian religion, for their existence, and the people, for the knowledge, and enjoyment of their individual rights, and safe protection, as the citizens of America are dependant upon natural light for vision, and the discernment of surrounding objects. All that civil government ought to do, or, in justice, can do, in regard to religion, is to secure to every individual, and denomination, the liberty of conscience—the unmolested right to worship God in the way they think most agreeable to true devotion. To go beyond these objects, further than the constitution, and laws have gone, would be usurpation, and oppression. Upon this view of the subject, there can be but one opinion amongst true republicans.

In the first chapter of this book, I have, in a minute analytical manner, demonstrated the truth of revelation, and shewn the necessity of it in teaching man the most important relations, and interests which he bears, or can conceive of. From the very nature, and necessity of things, without the divine light, the motives, and considerations which are exhibited, and disclosed to the human mind by the christian religion, our republican form of government could neither have been organized, nor can it be perpetuated. No other principles than those of a supernatural character, developed in the religion of Jesus Christ, can govern the minds, and conduct of men, so as to advance the intellectual, and moral perfection of his nature, and promote the interest, and happiness of the species. Take the influence of these away, and a free government must cease to exist, with its attendant felicities; while a government, correspondently high toned, and arbitrary, with the force, and influences of sensuality, avarice, and ambition, must be superinduced in order to preserve the social state, and restrain the fell passions of infuriate man. Sophistry may invent new forms of objection to these sentiments; while the sceptic, the infidel, and the libertine, will be ever ready to listen to arguments so congenial to their wishes. The conceited philosopher may insinuate, with a malignant sneer, that the christian religion was the primary cause of the intellectual darkness of the middle ages: he may describe in specious terms the lamentable consequences of a pernicious superstition, or the poisonous rancour of theological hatred. The artful historian may paint in the most striking colours, the arbitrary decrees of councils, and popes; the vices of ecclesiastics, and the horrors of religious wars; the sullen gloominess of the recluse, and the wanton penance of the ascetic. But, when they have lavished all their understanding, and ingenuity upon the subject, they have merely been detailing the *passions*, and *errors of men equally fallible as themselves*—passions, and errors too, which nothing prevents them from manifesting, and being guilty of, but the influence of that very christianity *enlightened* upon the manners, customs, and laws of the country in which they live, and by which they are only restrained. Could we unravel the fine, and

intricate web of the human mind, and develope its mysterious springs; could we, with absolute certainty, investigate its various dependancies, connexions, and relations; and trace its motions from the dawn of reason through the prejudices of education, and the diversified habits of life, we should be able to trace all of those excellencies to the force, and influence derived from the precepts of christianity. What is a conscience, entirely insensible to the precepts of revealed truth, either from the direct perception of their divine verity, and importance, or from those manners, and customs which they establish amongst men? What else can restrain man but the arm of arbitrary laws from acts of outrage, and cruelty? A people who have a free government, and are destitute of the principles, and influences of the Gospel upon their consciences, and conduct, must, of necessity, be licentious—exhibiting all that misrule, and sanguinary violence, which are consequential upon furious gusts of passion, projects of ambition, and usurpation. It was on this account that *Atheistical France* were incapable of a free government, after having broken the neck of despotism and unrivited the chains of slavery. With the destruction of monarchy, they also annihilated every idea of religion which is calculated to bind the conscience and govern the passions. When thus emancipated from regal authority and religious restraint, there were no countervailing principles which could arrest, or at all impede its rapid march from *Liberty and Equality* through the storms of anarchy and blood, (most shocking to *christianized humanity*) to a *military despotism*; which is now the scourge, and curse of an unjust, and sinful world, under the overruling providences of an offended heaven, through the desolations of which, and a regenerating Gospel, God will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he establish the reign of the Prince of Peace on earth. That nation, after having assumed the *name* of *Freedom*, never saw the hour when it stood self-poised, and with a calm discriminating eye viewed the rights of man in their proper relations and character, bottomed upon a just foundation. The reason was, that having rejected the revelations of God through which the true, and most important relations and interests of man are alone discernible, that

nation, of necessity were precluded that light by which such views, could be had; and being destitute of those views and the considerations which arise from them, their chief objects were those of sensuality, avarice and ambition. It is an eternity to come, of which we are only informed by revelation, that makes the christian religion so awful, and its motives so powerful. The American people were not like those of France when they had obtained their independence, and freedom. Religious liberty was the great, and leading inducement which actuated the first European settlers in America to emigrate from the old world; and the principles of christianity were esteemed the greatest boon which a merciful heaven had ever bestowed upon our sinful, miserable world. After the American war closed, which was a war of great difficulty, and suffering, and was prosecuted with *christian* bravery, and perseverance; the great patriots, and warriors, with hearts beating high with gratitude to God for their success, laid by their swords, and organized the plan of the American Republic. A dependance upon the great Creator through Jesus Christ, and the light of his word, gave wisdom, union, and decision to their councils, banished far from them the projects of ambition, and made them to their foes terrible as an army with banners. Through the revelations of God's Spirit in the Gospel, they beheld the rights, and interests of men explained as consisting in, and arising from not only earthly privileges, and enjoyments, but more especially from their invisible relations to their creator, which are established, and supported by his everlasting truth, and goodness. It is according to the decrees of God's throne, and the immutable order of its establishment that a people or nation will, and must be happy who are directed, and animated by his religion. It is that, which under individual or national sufferings can alone awaken in the bosom of mankind an infallible umpire, to point out the moral rectitude, or pravity of their actions. The judgment thus quickened, and regulated, dictates with authority to the angry passions, and commands them to be still. It imposes restraints upon sensuality, avarice, and ambition, which are drenching our world in blood, and pouring the most malignant poison into the hearts of men. It says un-

to them, pointing to the rights, and interests of men, according to Gospel requisitions, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It is by reason of the benign, and preceptive influences of the christian religion, blended with the contexture, and operations of the American Republics, that they stand DIVINELY distinguished from the Republic of Rome: which in its meridian greatness was tarnished by gladiatorial shows, and the butcheries of human beings to the number of tens of thousands annually, in their amphitheatrical combats with ferocious wild beasts for the amusement of her philosophers, statesmen, &c. It is indeed impossible to approximate to a conception, much less to a calculation of the beneficial consequences of the christian religion in ameliorating the condition of man, and improving his intellectual, moral, and social nature. Every destructive vice it has prevented, every pernicious usage it has removed—it pours into the bosom the softest sensibilities of humanity, and raises to the highest point of intellectual greatness the soul of man. Without the plastic, and equalizing powers, and operations of the christian religion upon the mind, and character of man, his great intellectual capacities, and bodily strength, only qualify him for being a terror, and a curse to his species. His intellectual, and moral powers cannot either be directed to, employed upon, or regulated by, those objects, and principles; those considerations, and motives, in which consist his greatest perfection, and happiness without the divine lights of heaven which emanated from the throne of God through the Prince of Peace. This is not less true in civil governments than in individual persons: it applies universally to all orders, and conditions of the intelligent subjects of this fallen province of God's universal dominion, whether in their individual, social, civil, or religious relations. In the present momentous crisis of the world, if it be asked why are kingdoms rising against kingdoms, and nations against nations; why the universal horrors, and desolations of war? the answer is supplied by the word of God; they spring from the lusts of men, the vile fevers of their hearts, ungoverned by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yes, this is the great source of the universal suffer-

ings at this time, which extort the groans of expiring humanity from every quarter of the globe—the disregard, and contempt of the necessary practical connexion between the revealed religion of heaven, and the just, and sound policy of the nations of the world. God is as well the moral, as he is the natural governor of our earth. He has erected a kingdom amongst men; he has explained their duties, and published his laws for the regulation of their conduct—their official, and divine character, are attested by the blazing signature of the Holy Ghost. They are armed with heavy penalties against transgression, not only of an eternal, but also of a temporal nature, as they secure the highest blessings, the safest protection, and greatest security to the obedient, in time, and through eternity. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. 4. 8. God having established his Gospel, (a government of grace) and demonstrated the indissoluble connexion between obedience to his laws, and commandments, and the prosperity of a nation, and people, by his administrations in the Jewish theocracy, which are written for our instruction, he has been waiting to be gracious; proclaiming himself **THE LORD** **THE LORD** God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; but who will by no means clear the guilty. The nations through all Christendom denying by their conduct their dependance upon him or his revelations for their administrations of government, although God had revealed his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men **WHO HOLD THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**, he is at this time chastising the iniquities of the earth by the operations of those very passions, and that ambition, rage, and false honour, which necessarily spring from the human heart unsubdued by the principles of the Gospel. It can no longer be said, as was predicted of scoffers, who were to come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.” The world is approaching the millennial æra—its approximation is written in blood. The Lord is not slack concerning his

promise as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pet. 3. 3—4. 9. The long suffering, and mercy of God, are often mistaken for either a want of superintendance, or neglect of the concerns of men, and governments. It is remarkable, that God, in his administrations towards man, has ever communicated, by revelation, his will as their rule of conduct, and, even after transgression, has given them opportunities, and warnings to repent, previous to his sending his judgments, and chastisements. He has demonstrated that he will be praised; if not by the willing sacrifice of the heart in sincere obedience; by the wrath of men. His judgments are his strange work: his throne he must, and will maintain; and, if the disobedience of men forbid his reigning in mercy, he will in judgment; for he is wonderful in council, and excellent in working; justice, and judgment are the habitation of his throne; mercy, and truth go before his face. The various speculations, and theorising upon politics, about the rights of men, sound policy, &c. will, ere long, give way, to the piercing convictions forced upon the conscience by the bloody horrors of war, intestine broils, and civil distractions, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only safe rule of action, as well for nations, and governments, as neighbourhoods, and individuals. God is the Lord, and must be obeyed, as well in the exercise of political rights, and civil administrations, as in individual worship, and religious duties. He will be regarded as the Lord of the conscience. These things are urged home to the hearts of men, while religious parties, and denominations are too much wrapped up in the cob-webs of their own brain, and are more attentive to their own *peculiar sectarian explanations* of scripture, than in the discharge of the great political, moral, and religious duties of their profession.

No politician can understand the present unparalleled condition of the world, either as it relates to the true source of bleeding humanity, its design, and ultimate end, only as he is informed by the revelations of God himself in the scriptures. Nor is it possible to employ an antidote to, or avert the ruin which seems to threaten our world, but

from the same source. I know, that it is thought quite superstitious, and unphilosophical, to refer to the bible for political information relative to the duties or happiness of a people, or the destinies of nations, since the *natural energies of the human mind were developed by the principles of MODERN PHILOSOPHY*. Religious errors, and oppressions, and that very philosophy, are the efficient causes of the present desolation of the old world. Under the dispensation of heaven, they operate as the mutual scourges of each other. This same wretched philosophy, and the misapprehensions of the Gospel in the minds of the people of the United States of America, in regard to their political, and religious interests, duties, and policy, are amongst the great procuring causes of their present sufferings, and those which are impending. This disastrous state of things will progress in some form or other; or, if suspended, the causes will continue to exist, and be ready at all times to be put into activity, until *the wisdom which is from above* directs the conduct of our people, and governments in the exercise of their civil rights, and political operations. I am asked, how is this great reformation to be effected, and in what will it consist? I answer, that it is to be effected by the professors, and friends of christianity doing their duty in the exercise of their elective franchise, in their selection of proper persons for public office. The reformation will consist in God being recognized as the rightful, and gracious sovereign of our world, and in the principles, and spirit of christianity, being the rule of civil administration, and national policy. This is not to be effected by the civil establishment of religion; but by making the will of God, as revealed, the law of the mind, by which the civil, and religious duties of men alone can be perceived, felt, and properly regarded.

I cannot but think, that this subject can be placed in such a fair, intelligible, and strong point of view, as to produce an entire union of opinion, and an irresistible conviction of the importance, and necessity of observing the duties which it imposes. In the first place, I ask, (in order to rouse the conscience, which has heretofore been lulled into a sinful repose by the *impious maxim*, that religion, and political rights, and blessings, have no connexion; and

to awaken the mind to a candid, serious investigation,) whether the worshippers of God, in this christian land, and the citizens of the United States, exist independent of, and without obligations to him, in the possession, and enjoyment of their civil rights, and privileges? The voice of every christian will answer in the negative. I again ask, what those dependancies are, what those duties, and how to be discharged? I answer, that it is not only in God we live, and move, and have our being, but that we are dependant upon him for those divine principles in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by the influence of which man is qualified for a republican government, and, in the observance of which, a nation can only be prosperous, and happy. These principles in the divine œconomy of grace were given to man for his instruction, and by which to regulate his conduct, not to supersede the use of his intellectual, and moral powers, but to enlighten, direct, and govern them. They cannot produce a happy result, without being thus observed. When thus regarded, as the governing principles of grace, and truth, God is glorified in the happiness of man; which is the true design, and tendency of the Gospel dispensation. It is not less true in a political, than in a religious point of view. The command is, that *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*. It may be asked, how is God glorified by a representative government? I answer, by the public functionaries being regulated by his word, and commandments in their public administrations, and private conduct. Men of these principles, and character, can only be promoted to office by the suffrage of the people; and, of course, God's glory, and the social happiness of mankind in this respect, depends upon the right use of the principle of elective franchise. Here, then, we arrive, by a direct course of deduction, to the indispensable political duty of every christian, and enlightened friend of humanity. I do not mean that God will, by the *immediate* operations of his Spirit, *miraculously* bless our nation for choosing of men to administer the government, who are devoted to his service, and glory. The happiness or misery of a nation is correspondent with the rectitude or depravity of its measures; and these are of a like complexion with the moral character, and principles of

the rulers. The only means which produce a pure, and undefiled heart, are the truths of the Gospel. Hence it is, "when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, and when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn." Prov. 29. 2. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. Prov. 14. 34. The legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government, being occupied by *enlightened*, and pure christianity, would, of necessity, exhibit an entirely renovated state of things. The glory of God, and happiness of mankind, would, of necessity, be the consequence. God would reign in peace, and man would live in happiness. Spiritual wickedness in high places would be put down, and God would be glorified in all things; his name would never be used but with suitable awe, and veneration. The Gospel becoming the law of the mind, and the ruling principle of the heart, man would cease to thirst for his fellows blood; and a conduct regulated by it, would disarm raging passion of its fierceness, and heap coals of fire upon the head of its unhappy possessor. The consternating, and heart-piercing interrogatory of our Saviour, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" would paralyze inordinate desire, projects of ambition, &c. which lead to chicanery, corruption, and intrigue, and prompt to such a course of measures, and policy, as to make the people mourn, and nations to war against nations. The penitentiary system, which was certainly the growth of christianity in its origin, though probably not known or thought to be so by mankind in general, would be entirely completed, and regulated by its principles. The unhappy subjects of its operations, would, upon their entrance there *be presented with a Bible*; and, during their confinement, labour, and privations, which are well calculated to abate, or break the force of wicked habits, and passions, to tranquilize the mind, and bring it to reflection, would be tenderly, affectionately, and solemnly taught the great truths of the Gospel, as the only mean of a *radical reformation of mind, and conduct; of an intellectual, and moral regeneration*. In its present plan, and œconomy, but little is effected in this way; the chief object seems to be, to make

money by the labour of the poor wretches; their bodily exertions in mechanical operations, and their occasional confinement in dark cells, are the chief objects of regard—they are sufficiently impressed with their degraded and base condition; but their ears are scarcely ever saluted by the cheering, and renovating voice of the Gospel. This part of the system savours of any thing else as much as of christianity. Bodily chastisements, unconnected with proper mental discipline, and moral instruction, can never produce abiding reformations.

This state of Gospel triumph would not only diffuse its blessings all around, upon every condition, and order of society, in the government in which we live, but it would extend its blessings to the savage tribes. The influences of the Gospel in civilizing the heathen nations, every person must admit. It not only exalts them to a proper sense of their own relations, and interests, by the knowledge of spiritual things which it imparts, but by the influence of this very knowledge, and the duties which it imposes, it changes their blood-thirsty nature into friendship, piety, and peace.

The opinions of mankind of interest, and happiness, are relative; they arise from the views the mind has of its connection with external things: the invisible, and everlasting relations which it sustains, and which are only ascertainable, and can be perceived through the revelations of God's Spirit in the Gospel, exhibit a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory to the humble, and contrite heart; but a fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation against the ungodly. Through the influence of these considerations, and the chastisements of heaven upon disobedience, the objects of sensuality, avarice, and ambition, are stripped of their improper attractions, and the cup of forbidden indulgence is dashed, and poisoned.

When the contracted, and bigotted notions about religion shall be cured, and those objections which arise from angry sectarian contentions, in the eyes of mankind, are obviated, and its true professors conscientiously perform their duties, and obey their commandments of the Lord, then peace will be as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea. Isa. 48. 18. Then the reign of the Prince of Peace

upon earth as described in the following, and striking manner by Isaiah, will commence in our world: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and fating together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Isa. 11. 6—10. "The nations, and people shall beat their swords into plough shares; and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. 2. 4. When the great reformation takes place amongst christians, in the performance of their religious, and political duties—when they become one, the world will begin to believe in the Redeemer, and his glorious reign will become universal.

In governments like those of America, in which the people are the source of power, and which is delegated by election for short periods to their public functionaries, a very awful responsibility is devolved upon the christian part of the community in the exercise of their elective franchise. Every representative for whom they vote to fill any office, represents them, not only in the eyes of the nation, according to the social compact, but also in the eyes of God, and the angels of heaven. All the peculiarities of character by which he is distinguished, whether of profanity or blasphemy; intemperance, or debauchery; false honour, or pride; political intrigue, or treachery; projects of ambition, or self-aggrandizement; whether advanced by secret corruption, or overt acts of treason; or, on the other hand, if distinguished by doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God, having an eye to his honour, and glory, and the real happiness of the people; I say, whether distinguished by one or the other of these peculiarities of character, it

is reflected back upon them who are his constituents; his actings, and doings are their own by representation; and the curses or blessings correspondent with this diversity of character, and conduct, must be felt by all. There is but one way right, and all the rest are wrong. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits; but the wisdom which descendeth not from above is earthly, sensual, and devilish. James 5. 15. 17. Fools despise wisdom—her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is the tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorner; but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools." It is in consequence of the wisdom in which God hath founded the earth, that any other conduct, amongst men or nations, than that which is dictated by the *word of his council*, as the rule of their duty, leadeth to iniquity, and incurreth his chastisements. This proceeds from the connection which exists between causes, and effects in religion, governments, &c. How absurd, and inconsistent, then, is it, for a christian people to appoint days of fasting, humiliation, &c., and to pray to God to give wisdom to their counsellors, &c. &c. and at their elections, to make no distinction between those who believe in God, and acknowledge his authority, and the truth of his word; and those who, by their words, and deeds, say there is no God; that the scriptures are not true, or that the duties, and relations of men, and nations, are not ascertained by his revelations in them? The prayers, and devotions of men, under such circumstances, are they, concerning which, God hath said, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear." Isa. 1. 15. His commands are, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your *doings*, from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." *ibid.* 16. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good

of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." *ibid.* 19—20. The *mediatorial governor of the world, who spake as man never spake*, said, "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gathereth they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." These truths are not less divine, and unexceptionable, when applied to the administrations of government, and to public functionaries, than to the professors of the christian religion, *as such*. How absurd would it be, to expect, by the prayers of the christain world, to make figs grow upon thorns, or grapes upon bramble bushes? Make the tree good, and his fruit good. "Faith without works is dead; for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead." James 2. 20. 26—If devotion, fasting, &c. do not inspire christians with a sense of their duties &c. in their political, as well as their religious relations, and prompt them to their performance, they are not authorised by God to hope for the smiles, and blessings of heaven. Rulers, and counsellors who reject the word of God and its divine authority will not by the prayers of his worshippers be inspired by the wisdom of his councils; for "the *entrance of his word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple*." It was by reason of this truth that Solomon said "This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it *seemed* great unto me: there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and beseiged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a *poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city*. Then, said I, wisdom is better than strength. Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good." Eccles. 9. How often do we see men of extraordinary powers of mind in public stations, so much devoted to their own popularity, and exclusively at-

tentive to those things which promote it, both in their public, and private conduct, as to demonstrate that the true, and abiding interests of the country have but little or no place in their minds. It can not be otherwise; for, unless the invisible relations, and dependancies of man are realized, passion, vanity, ambition, &c. must of necessity be the governing principles. The truths of the gospel *believed*, afford the only true, and effectual cure for these things. For a moment view the present threatening aspect of these United States—their union is endangered, which if consummated, must prove the most ruinous of all events, to thousands of unsuspecting, and innocent persons. Trace this evil to its source, and it will be found to *originate* in the passions, pride, self-conceit, vanity, or ambition, &c. of a few men, who, in opposition to each other, are struggling for office, or are actuated by unworthy competition; who, in order to be pre-eminently distinguished, use violent, and angry recrimination, and opprobrious epithets. When they turn their faces to their constituents, they expect (and, alas! too often meet with them) high sounding plaudits. The people, becoming warmed by the same kind of strange fire, are urged on to great extremes, political bickerings, and animosities. Party spirit, and angry violence, always spring from this source; and without the controuling influence of christianity, it cannot be otherwise where there are great intellectual powers, or restless spirits. They, without the equipoising influence of those views, considerations, and motives, which are ascertained to the mind by the revelations of God, are as irregular, rapid, and violent in their operations, as the motion of a watch, or clock, without a balance wheel, or a pendulum. The truth of these remarks may be easily apprehended, by abstracting in the mind all the ideas, and opinions; all the fears, and hopes; and all the mental exercises, which arise from religious considerations, habits, manners, and customs. Destroy the Sabbath, and all the christian ordinances; and release the public mind from every restraint which is imposed upon it by revealed religion, and a free government could not possibly exist. It is apparent to every observant, and reflecting mind, that, in proportion to the existence of religious truths in the minds of men, and as they operate

upon public opinion in forming the morals of a state or nation, so is the capacity of that people for the enjoyment of a free government in a state of peace, tranquility, and happiness, and the certainty of its preservation. And, on the contrary, as a people recede from true religion, and absolve themselves from its restraints, so do they approach licentiousness, and anarchy; which are the never-failing precursors of violence, usurpation, and despotism. Our memorable, and unparalleled *Washington*, who had been on the public theatre for near half a century, and whose intrinsic excellencies, as a great, and good man, will ever be placed in the superlative degree, as long as worth, and greatness are esteemed—this GREATEST of the sons of America; who knew, by actual experience, and observation, the springs of human action, and the absolute necessity of divine truth, solemnly, and conscientiously regarded by the statesmen, and people, in order to give stability, and to secure the continuance of a free government, made the following observations in his great political legacy, his Farewell Address to the people of the United States:—

“Of all the dispositions, and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.

“It is substantially true; that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free

government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?" Ramsay's *Life of Washington*, p. 294.

True virtue, and *sound* morality are impossible without the light, and influence of revealed religion. Exclude it entirely, and great intellectual powers, and a warm enterprising temperament in a free government, especially in times of trouble, produce as violent, and disorganising effects upon the political body, as do the muscles, and nerves of a strong athletic person, violent spasmodic contractions, *wringing out* the life, and soul when under the influence of a lock jaw.

If the christian religion is true; if it is really the salt of the earth, the light of life, and the essential, and only beaifying mean to the human race; if man, from the necessity of nature, is, without this religion, earthly, sensual, and devilish; its operations upon the mind, and characters of men, must be commensurate with their relations, and duties, whether, individual, social, or civil; religious, moral, or political, in order to produce its appropriate effects. A people possessing a free government cannot perpetuate it without conscientiously regarding of this great preservative mean in its application to those relations, and duties.

As I formerly observed, I again repeat, that no person can be a correct, and safe politician, in the present unparalleled crisis of the world, without the information derived from prophesy. He who rejects that light is as unable to guide the bark of state, or to preserve a course of safe, and sound policy to America, as a mariner is unable to steer a vessel, upon the stormy deep, without chart or compass. Excluding the knowledge from that quarter, by which alone sound discretion can be employed, the warmer the zeal, and prompter the measures, the exertions will only endanger the safety of the country, and too probably precipitate it into inevitable ruin. None but those who realize the fact, that God governs the world, and that the Gospel contains a development of the principles, and duties of men, and nations, can, consistently, and in truth, concur in opinion with me. It is through the revelation of his will, and purposes, contained in the scriptures, that we learn that the present state of

things is, ere long, to change—that wickedness will be put down, and that nations, as well as individuals, shall acknowledge God's reign. The period has arrived, in the progress of the administrations of heaven, to that state of Gospel renovation, that no other alternative is left, than either to submit to the reign of the Gospel, or feel the chastising displeasure of its author. The first, and essential object to be regarded by the people of the United States, in order to escape the almost universal sufferings which threaten, is one which, without this view of the relations of our world, and the dispensations of heaven, will, in all probability be the last to be attended to; that is, the reformation of themselves, to be produced by practically realizing the connexion which subsists between the Gospel of God, and the duties, and happiness of a people. I wish not to be understood as meaning that the social, and civil concerns of our country can be administered without the rational exercise of the minds of *enlightened* statesmen; but the reverse. No degree of knowledge which was ever imparted by the immediate revelations from God, were designed to supersede the right use of the faculties; but only to afford the means, the light and knowledge which were necessary for being thus employed—and this is the very use which must be made of the word of God; if not *before*, it will *after*, great national sufferings. Neither do I wish to be understood as meaning that the American governments are precluded the right, according to Gospel principles, of engaging in war, and prosecuting it with vigour; the reverse of this is true. The very contexture, and first principles of natural, and social existence are for the purpose of self-preservation. The passions, selfishness, and ambition of men, and nations, often make war necessary on the part of a religious people. It is in that case an evil incidental to fallen, depraved humanity. But when that necessity is *constructive only*, or is produced in the mind by ideas of false honour, vain glory, passion, prejudice, or ambition; or should it *be righteous in itself*, and prosecuted by minds governed by those influences, it cannot fail producing, either directly or remotely, disastrous consequences. This proceeds from the necessity of things; for where these influences, &c. govern, there cannot be

wisdom in devising ways, and means or in their application to practical purposes. The fitness of things which exist in the order that God has established in relation to the proper influence of his religion upon human passions, and the reflections to which it prompts, forms the stable basis of the origin, and preservation of a free government, contrary to the maxim of modern philosophy. The history of the Jewish government is written in the old scriptures for the instruction of christian nations, and people; and to demonstrate the inseparable connection which exists between obedience to God's laws, and commands, and their happiness. It is impossible for any mind, even in speculation, to separate the ideas, and principles of revealed religion from the Republics of America, and do the subject justice; they form the very life, and soul of them; it is by their influence upon the intellectual, and moral characters of men, that they are made capable of free governments, of forming, and preserving them.

To conclude:—The revelations of God assure us, that the time is not very far distant, when the present state of society will be changed, when the Gospel, and glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the great deep. Before that time arrives the wicked nations of the earth are to drink deep of the cup of bitterness, and trembling. The present crisis of the world is portentous of that period. The whole habitable globe is in a state of commotion. The governments of the Old World are shaking to their centre, and our own country is wrapped in the flames of war. The end, however, which ushers in the millennial state, has not yet arrived. The *vintage* of God's wrath is yet to come. The people of America ought to observe the signs of the times as explained by scripture, and learn righteousness when the judgments of the Lord are upon the earth. A great change must be effected in their minds; and, in an especial manner, in those of the professors of religion, before peace, and happiness, return to the inhabitants of the United States upon lasting principles. It is melancholy to see that *sectarianism*, and its consequences, are the most serious obstacles to the prevalence of that unity of spirit in the bonds of peace upon which the great reformation depends. We ought to read the oracles of God so as to profit by them in all holi-

ness of life, and conversation. Neither a hearty reprobation of the corruptions of Popery; nor an abhorrence of the impious imposture of Mahomedanism; nor a detestation of the diabolical principles of Anti-Christ; nor zealous exertions to redress the injuries, and insults which we as a nation have received from the two great belligerents of Europe, are alone sufficient to prepare us for the kingdom of heaven, or the favour of God. We have much to do in correcting our own sins; and until that is done, we have no assurance that our country will be preserved from the great wreck of governments, and empires, which are going on to fulfil the high purposes of the Almighty. The first, and great truths to be realized towards correcting the crying sins of America are, that God reigns, and must be obeyed, and that his word is declarative of his will, and is the paramount rule of political, social, and religious life. Were the Legislators, and Rulers of America practically to realize these truths, as wise pilots of her bark, they would not permit it to leave the shore at the time that storms, and tempests are beating upon the whole earth, and sweeping from their foundations the oldest empires, and threatening almost universal desolation. "Blessed are they that read, and they that hear the words of *God's prophecy*; and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Upon the reading, hearing, keeping, and observing these things, depends the salvation of America.

[*FINIS.*]

ERRATA.

Page 32, line 12 from top, *for more works, read more marks.*

42, line 9 from top, *for spiritual matter, read spiritual matters.*

43, line 35, *for taught revelations, read taught relations.*

57, line 38, *for origin of sound, read organ of sound.*

70, line 35, *for od Gof, read God of.*

111, line 33. *erase to, next to his, at the end of the line.*

—————34, *erase they, the second word in the line.*

116, line 38, *for furnish, read finish.*

120, line 14. *erase never was.*

121, line 34, *for unto, read into.*

131, line 21. *for time and, read time or.*

179, line 24. *for interpretate read interpret.*

210, line 38. *for sheweth, read serveth.*

211, line 9. *for it, read them.*

243, line 23, *for diviven, read divine.*

297, line 39, *for their commandments, read the commandments.*

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