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A

**DESCRIPTION**  
**OF THE**  
**WORK of DIVINE GRACE**  
**ON THE**  
**SOULS OF SAVED SINNERS,**  
**IN ITS**  
**ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND COMPLETION.**  
**IN**  
**TEN FAMILAR DIALOGUES,**

Calculated (under Divine Influence)  
To awaken Conviction in the Careless, to lead the enquiring  
Mind to a found and saving KNOWLEDGE of GOD,  
And of the Grand Scheme of Redemption by JESUS CHRIST our  
LORD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,  
A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE  
**MILLENNIUM;**

**OR,**  
 *Latter Day's Glory of the True Christian Church.*

THE WHOLE COMPRISING  
A concise, clear, and scriptural View of Genuine Christianity, and  
pure Religion, experimental, sentimental, and practical.

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*By J. LAWRENCE, Bristol,*

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Unicuique verò datur declaratio spiritûs ad utilitatem—I. Cor. xii. 6.  
Ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum perfectè instructus.  
II. Tim. iii. 17.

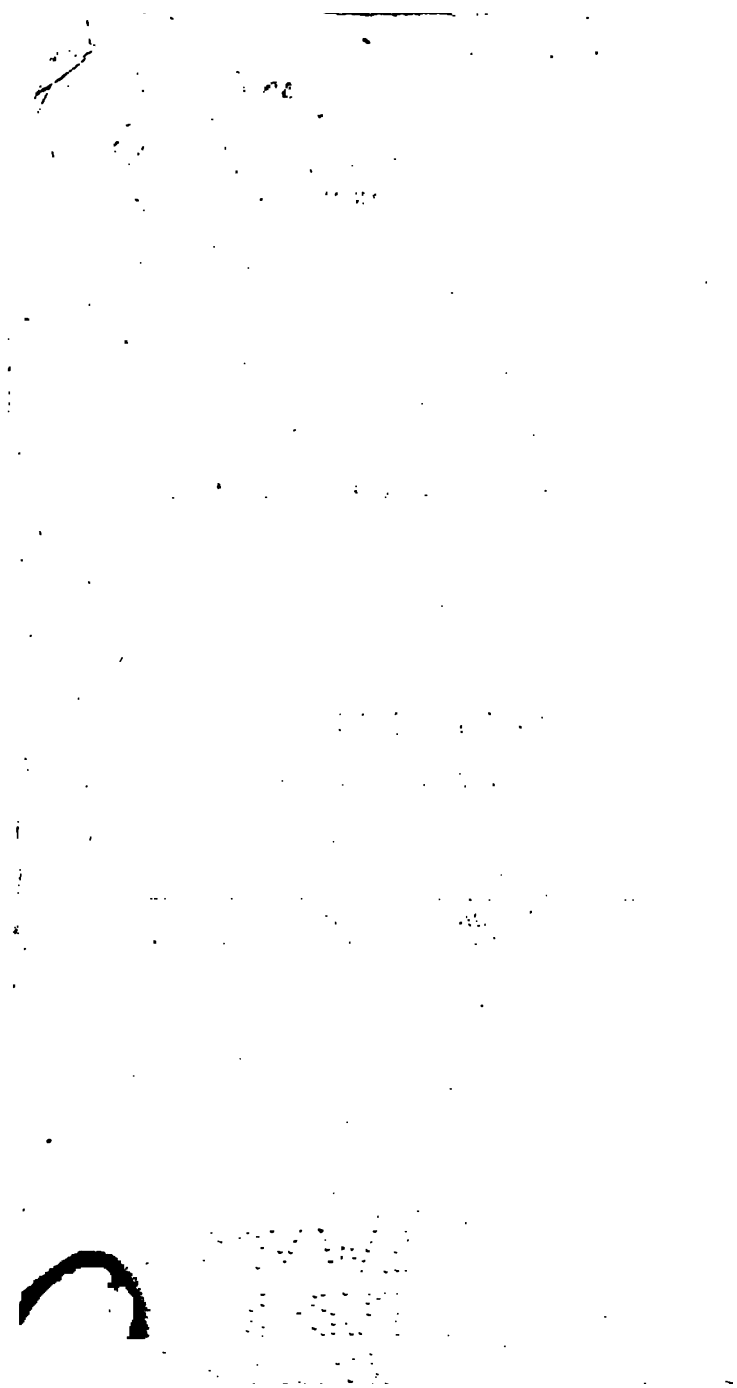
Ecri en un livre ce que tu vois.—Rev. i. 11.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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*Dear Brethren,*

**P**ERMIT me to present you with the fruits of my leisure hours. And let me hope they may be pleasing and profitable to you. And give me leave to say, that the study of the sacred Oracles has been my most favourite pursuit for some years. It is from them I derive my principles and views : I know of no other standard of Orthodoxy, to these only I appeal. Sametime, I am far from despising any help which good and learned men have furnished us with, for the better understanding of them ; yet it is not from men, but from the Divine Spirit that the important light must come, which is essentially necessary to enable us to understand the Gospel, and to believe to the saving of the soul.

I shall make no ostentatious boast, either of the merits of my performance, or of the invitations I have had to publish it : nor shall I remark on the coldness of some from whom I might have expected better things. Suffice it to say, that I feel conscious, that it is right for any man to whom his Creator has imparted suitable gifts and abilities, to contribute his mite (if it be but a mite) to do what he may to better the mental and moral condition of his fellow men. On this principle I aim to act ; and the success of it depends on the blessing of Him in whom we all live and move. I cast my performance and myself, at my Redeemer's feet, entreating him to use it for his own glory, and for the general good : and particularly, for the good of his own disciples, whom I esteem as the excellent of the earth, and for whom I have the best wishes, and the warmest affection next to that I owe to my Saviour.

And while I would gladly impart general instruction to the ignorant of my fellow men, and lead the enquiring mind to him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: I would also wish to encourage every good man to whom suitable abilities are given; to do whatever he can to spread divine knowledge, and to shew poor wanderers the way to life and peace.

For this end, let me remind them, there was of old an *Amos* (and others beside perhaps) among the herdmen at Tekoa,\* as well as in the Schools of the Prophets, who were employed by the Almighty to carry his messages to their fellow men, to denounce his judgments against the wicked, and to teach men the Will of God. And the blessed Jesus took his Apostles from among the Fishermen of his day, and from the receipt of custom; as well as from the feet of Gamaliel; to shew us, that now there is no particular nation, society, or set of persons; to whom an exclusive privilege is granted either to preach or teach, or be the only offensive or visible Church; to the exclusion of others. But there are some of all sorts of men in every nation, who fear God; and whom the Lord is pleased to bless with an interest in his favor, and to whom he gives gifts and abilities as he pleases. And these gifts are given not for themselves alone, but to fit them to do good to others who stand in need of it. And the Apostle says to edify the body of Christ *i. e.* his church and people. There is then, no privileged class of Priesthood under the Gospel, as there was under the Law, for all the Lord's people are Kings and Priests unto God. And many of them are blest with edifying gifts, in the exercise of which many of the followers of Christ are taught and benefited, and others convinced and converted. And every *good man* to whom such gifts are imparted, has an absolute right to exercise those talents which God has given him, wherever and whenever he has a call thereto; and more, he has a right to seek opportunities to do good. By all this I mean not to encourage every ignorant chatterer to attempt preaching who is

not

not able to speak intelligibly, nor keep his language above contempt : but I speak of those who have edifying talents, and can convey instruction in an instructive manner. And I am persuaded, that there are now, as there were of old, some of this sort who never went to an Academy, as well as others who have been there. I would neither run down nor over-value human learning ; but would say, let every preacher acquire as much as he can, and in my opinion, the more the better. Those who can, may do well to avail themselves of the helps of religious Seminaries : and perhaps it is very possible that others may do as well, who use their diligence at their leisure hours to acquire Languages, &c. and follow their employments also. And indeed I think, the mind is more free to examine and compare spiritual things with spiritual, and will feel greater freedom in professing what the man believes to be true, when he is conscious he is under no dictatorial control but the scriptures, or that he is not dependant on the good pleasure of those he is connected with. However, the Lord himself chuses the lot of all his Saints, and no doubt, the lot of all his Ministers ; and *that lot* is a lot of *love*, and the best that can be. And if men would *learn* not to over-rate the Scholar, nor undervalue those of less literary attainments, the church would be in a much more prosperous state than at present (in my opinion). But the times of reformation will arrive, when whatever is injurious will be removed. This is the Lord's own work, and he will effect it in the most proper season. A more copious effusion of the divine Influences is promised in Scripture, and it will in due time be granted, then what is wrong will be discovered and set right ; and that which is right in the main will be better attended to ; but we are told, *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased ; and in consequence of that, the wise shall understand, though (mean while) none of the wicked (determined infidels) shall understand.*

The following Dialogues are now sent forth with an humble but fervent desire to do as much good as

the Lord shall be pleased to effect by means of them. I have wished to keep the *agreeable* as well as the *useful* in view, that I may, if possible, attract the notice of all sorts of men, and tempt them to read. And as example has mightier effects than precepts, I have aimed to set examples before my readers, by a sort of parable. And as this is a way of writing sanctioned by him who is the true God and Eternal Life, I conceive I need not be ashamed to adopt it. And while he uses the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Fig Tree, Vineyard, &c. it is not improper for me, I suppose, to represent my meditations on divine truth by taking a walk, going to the House of God, &c. Our Lord's parables were taken from things existing around them to whom he spake, and these are taken from what actually passes among us. I have thought too, that a survey of the divine works in the natural world tended to convey spiritual instruction; and therefore, I have availed myself of it, and I hope, not in vain. But in this mirror, I hope may be seen something of that experience which every Christian in the world feels more or less of. And also, how that divine change which our Lord calls the **New Birth** is begun on the mind by means of the word, and the Spirit's energy. The conviction and conversion of a Sinner, is set forth, and I hope to some advantage, so that the intelligent reader may by comparing his bent of mind with what is here laid down, come to some certainty respecting his real state. And the Christian see his feelings set before him so plainly, that he need not be doubtful any longer. Therefore, I hope it may be a mean of strengthening to the weak, and of comfort to the doubtful, as well as of quickening to those who may have dwindled and waxed too dull in the ways of God. But I know that all this depends entirely on the divine blessing. That blessing I would hope for, and intreat at Thy hands, O Thou who hast the Words of eternal Life. Thou canst cause it to be as a breast of consolation to the babes in thy church; and as a portion of suitable nourishment to the young men, as well as of strong meat to the fathers,

fathers, grant this, for the honour of thy holy Name, and to Thee shall be all the praise !

But in the present day, when the haters of revealed religion pretend almost to deify human reason, I thought it but proper to try how far reason may be useful in religious matters : therefore, I have aimed to be a little philosophical in the survey of the divine works in creation, and by this method I have gained an opportunity to shew (to some advantage I hope) wherein reason is useful and wherein it is inefficient in religious enquiry. And this has opened the way to a clearer discovery, that we stand in absolute need of a better guide than human reason alone ; and also of some better righteousness than our own to appear in before God with acceptance. In Dialogues I. and II. this interesting matter is clearly set forth ; so plainly, that the effects of divine truth on the minds of the enlightened may be clearly discerned, and the understandings of such enabled to discover the work of God to have been really begun on them. And on the other hand, that the same divine truths which soften and renew the hearts of true Christians ; do through the wilful obstinacy and perverseness of infidels and pharisees, harden them into inveteracy against the Gospel of Christ, and the professors of it. Just as the same sun softens the wax, and hardens the clay. But the hardening of the clay is not the fault of the sun, but of its own nature ; so, the hardening of impenitent sinners, is not the fault of the Gospel, or the Author of it : but their own perverseness. To believers, the preaching of evangelic truth is a savour of life unto life ; but to the rejecters of it, of death unto death ; and that justly, for their wilful impenitence.

To understand and believe the Gospel, is the greatest of mercies, and productive of the highest felicity. And those who are instrumental in bringing their fellow men to this knowledge and faith ; are the best friends of their fellow men, and themselves the happiest of mankind. And the feeblest of them will shine at last, in the Kingdom of Heaven, brighter than the sun, for ever more.

With

With them number'd may I be !  
Now and in eternity.

But to remain blind amidst the blaze of Gospel Light which we now enjoy ; and inveterate against the Gospel ; is the most dreadful of all curses : and such will sink to the deepest torments of Hell.

To prevent this, may my readers examine their own hearts by comparing them with the Word of God, and what is here written ; and if they have not believed to the saving of the Soul, may they now be made so happy, as to become immediately the disciples and followers of the blessed Jesus. I desire that not one of my readers may take any thing I have written on trust, but compare the whole of it with the sacred Scriptures. To aid them in this work chapter and verse are referred to at the bottom of the pages. Whatever agrees with the Scriptures is infallibly right, and that which contradicts it is absolutely wrong : but I desire to have my book tried by it, for I trust it will bear a scriptural examination. May the author and readers stand the test of the last great day with consolation and joy, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Dear Brethren,

I am sincerely yours,

No. 4, Philadelphia-Street,  
April 2d. 1800.

J. LAWRENCE.

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### CLAVIS.

*Evangelista*, a Christian Preacher.

*Civics*, a fellow Citizen with the Saints, and of the Household of God. *Eph. 2. 19.*

*Ethics*, a Moralist, or Pharisee.

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A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
WORK of DIVINE GRACE, &c.

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DIALOGUE I.

EVANGELISTA on a Morning's Walk, meets ETHICUS and CIVICUS : and after suitable Expressions of civility\* and politeness mutually passed, EVANGELISTA began his Observations thus :

**EVANGELISTA.** This fine wholesome air, these flowers, and the beautiful face of creation in general, awakens in the mind of the serious observer sentiments of devout admiration of the wisdom and goodness of that Almighty Being who formed all things by the Word of his Power.

**Ethicus.** Sir, you are perfectly right : for by beholding nature at present in its variegated and beautiful dress, the mind of the virtuous philosopher feels pleasing enlargement, and his contemplations on the Creator's works are excited and put in motion, like the wheels of a watch by the force of its chief spring. And the imagination becomes assitant to devout meditation. This raises in the mind a thousand beautiful and striking ideas of divine wisdom and goodness. And by musing on nature's beauties we are led to contemplate the Creator's glories, and the excellences of Deity break in on our minds, and hereby an important knowledge of God is promoted.

*Evan.*

\* Real Religion does not make Men clumsy and clownish, nor servile and flattering.



*Evan.* Dear *Ethicus*, your observations are ju and it gives me real pleasure to have met with person of your contemplative turn ; and I assure y I shall be further pleased to enjoy your company the end of an agreeable walk.

*Ethicus.* Sir, we are perfectly agreed, and I a willing to walk at your leisure, and to improve t moments as we pass by suitable conversation : but with you to take the lead in our meditations.

*Evan.* Permit me to tell you I wish you to our conductor into the delightful fields of meditati at present, for I am persuaded you are capable leading us forward in a pleasing and instructive ma ner to contemplate the various works of the gre Creator. Therefore, if you please, we will listen : tentively to your observations : and while you a pointing out to us the various wonders of nature, v shall be both pleased and benefited ; and the bett prepared to enter on the contemplation of the y more abundant glories of divine grace.

*Civicus.* Dear *Ethicus*, oblige me thus far, and pr ceed to your observations *sans cérémonie*\*

*Ethicus.* Gentlemen, I consent to your wishe and begin by observing, that an union of souls at : occasion like the present, creates the most refin friendship ; and if I mistake not, I feel at this mome something of that benign attraction. Therefore am pleased with the idea that we have met for mutu pleasure and benefit. I proceed to observe,

1. That the being of a God is manifested by t works he has made, † for the material worlds (whi of themselves are but dead and motionless matte proclaim his infinite power and immense wisdom, well as his unbounded goodness. They tell us silent but powerfully, that the hand which made them divine ; that, the power which supports them Almighty ; and that the goodness which supplies the is infinite. For,

2. If we look to the starry regions, there we i luminaries, which in all probability, are worlds immen

\* Without ceremony. † Psa. xix. 1.—Rom. i. 20.

immence size, and inconceivable weight, rolling in fluid æther, some placed like our sun, and others revolving round them as planetary worlds, which in magnitude surpasses the size of this earth many thousands of degrees: and, admirable to tell, they keep up their constant and regular rotation round their respective centers. This is known to be the case with the planetary globes in the solar system, and it is highly probable it is so with others in higher systems: and that the same regular order which is constantly kept up by these, is also by those, which roll above them. This order did infinite Wisdom at first ordain, and these mighty masses of senseless matter, abide invariably by his fixed laws. Those placed centrally, shine with inherent lustre, but all the planets with borrowed light: the former shed day on all those which revolve round them, and the latter derive their lustre, and emit borrowed light; and when shade succeeds to solar rays, they augment the glory of the sparkling expanse which glitters over us. They likewise receive light for their own atmospheres, and that lumination constitutes day. This we see in our own world, and it is highly probable it is so in numberless others. But,

3. All those worlds started into existence at their Creator's first call, and the light they emit, whether solar or planetary, was produced by Him who is the Father of Lights.\* And they continue to roll, and perform their revolutions at his pleasure; at his frown they would all disappear. But by their revolutions, he deals out our days, and by the mode of their orbital motions, he sends us summer and winter in due season; and distributes cold and heat in due proportions, as well as light and shade in proper seasons. This most beautiful order and motion is the product of infinite skill; and enstamped on these orbs, by that divine Agency which gave being to us all, and in whom we live and move; and to whose word, the seasons, the earth, seas, and all nature is obedient; all obey *his* summons by whose almighty Word all things were created. But,

4. The

\* James i. 7.

4. The briny deep, and the stormy wind, shew the wisdom and power of the great Creator; and manifest that he is infinite in wisdom and almighty in strength. The former, as if it had instinctive knowledge, rises and falls as the Moon looks towards it, or turns her face from it, as if conscious of the command of the great Creator. And did the men who ride on the Waves, and traverse the Ocean, but open their eyes, might they not behold the wisdom and power, as well as the goodness of the great Jehovah, manifested in their favour? And while they stay on the land, and when they ride on the waves, may they not see that God has commanded the seas to serve them; and that his own hand protects them when the latter causes the mighty billows to rise and roar? But in the next place,

5. Who then behold these astonishing works of the Deity without being struck with wonder, astonishment, and admiration? Who, I say, can fail to discover and admire that display of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, which the works of the Almighty display unto men? For, wherever we turn our eyes we may clearly see it. And what is the silent language of all this to man? Do not all things as with one all-powerful voice say, Behold thy Creator's Glories oh man? \* And learn to know, adore, and praise him. Learn to know him as the God of power, who made† and preserves all things.—Learn to know him, as the God of wisdom, who orders and governs‡ all worlds. Learn to know him, as the God of goodness, who feeds all creatures with his bounty. Learn to know him, as the great first cause of all things, and the preserver of universal nature: as the ever-living and all-producing cause of all existence (sin only excepted) and as the final end of all things. Behold how the eyes of all animated beings look to him § for supply; and notice how he gives them their meat in due season. Men and beasts live on his bounty, birds and fishes are fed by his munificence; and the smallest reptile or insect, live and move in him. Therefore,

\* Psal. cxviii. 43.

† Rev. iv. 11.

‡ cxv. 13.

§ veries 9, 15, 16.

G. I perceive clearly, that there is no spot however small, nor any globe however great ; from whence the divine power is absent, but his agency and influence is every where present ;\* and his wisdom and goodness is evidently discerned by all intelligences. No limits can circumscribe him, nor any bounds exclude him ; he is every where present at the same moment, to the utmost extent of his vast dominion. Consequently, every thing both minute and magnificent is known to him with infinite precision ; the angelic mind and the human heart, are each and equally known to him. Nor is it possible for any thing to escape his notice. And from hence I infer, that we owe our preservation to his protecting care, and are indebted to him for life and every comfort that we enjoy. Therefore, we should love him above all things, and serve him with our whole hearts : and live to glorify him in all obedience to his commands.—*Matt. xxii. 37, 38.*

*Evan.* Dear *Ethicus*, I am pleased with your animating survey of the works of the Almighty and the inference drawn from them is highly proper. True indeed, his almighty Arm holds all things in existence, and his general goodness supplies the wants of every living thing. And it is as true, that one day he will cause the world on which we live to suffer a universal wreck, and at his command to disappear. Meanwhile, his smile imparts life and joy to the christian mind, and at his frown the wicked perish. Therefore, it is most true, that universal nature owes its existence to his creating power, and its preservation to his upholding hand, for *Jehovah as creator, is Lord of all.*†

*Ethicus.* Dear *Evan*. I admit the justice of your remarks, and freely acknowledge, that I myself owe my being to him, for I derived it from him, and I live and move in him, my life and breath are in his hands, I exist by his good pleasure, and I am persuaded that men and angels are indebted to him for being and preservation. Therefore I make this acknowledgement to his praise.

\* Psalm, cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.

† Psalm, cii. 25.—Heb. i. 10.

*Evan.* Very properly observed my *Ethicus* : and now while we are conversing in this agreeable manner, we may notice also, the further displays of divine wisdom and goodness in the herbage of the field, the grass, the flowers and the fruits which grow for man's use, the vegetables which the earth produces, and the fruits which grow on shrubs and trees, all point us to the wisdom and goodness of God. And in our surveys of the creation, and its various glories, order, and beauties : how can we forbear breaking forth in devout exclamation, saying, O Lord ! how wonderful are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all ! Thou art wonderful in counsel and excellent in working ! Thy manifold works praise thee, and thy faints bless thee. Bless the Lord O my soul ! Who, I say, can help exclaiming thus who possesses the least spark of true sensibility ?

*Ethicus.* Dear *Evan.* I think as you do on this important subject. And when I recollect, that the same sap, and the same earth, within an inch or two, or a very few feet or yards, brings forth food of the most delicious nourishment, and weeds of the most deadly poison,\* which are also nourished and matured by the

\* *Ethicus* reminds us here, very pertinently and properly, of a striking display of divine power and wisdom in this part of the creation. And one would imagine, that his observations would at least confound every Atheist in the world. For what cause can be conceived which can produce such effects, but the wisdom and power of God ? It is clear that the Sap of the Earth in its various and diversified productions sets forth such evident proofs of an all disposing, all over-ruling, and all producing Power, as none but a Being of infinite wisdom and omnipotence could effect. It is clear then, that this part of the operations of nature is an indisputable proof of the being and power of nature's God, and a display of divine wisdom and goodness. And to the pious and contemplative mind it holds forth emblematically,

1. The manifold wisdom of Deity, and the living proofs of divine power, which produces from the same materials most nutritious and wholesome food, and also the most destructive poison. But,

2. It is emblematical of what divine Wisdom does amongst the race of men. For from the same original stock, proceeds the divine, the philosopher, the physician, and the clown. The

the same sun and rain : I am struck with astonishment at the wisdom and power of God, who makes of the same materials things so amazingly different in their nature and tendencies. But alas ! you know, when we look around us we see many insensible and thoughtless ones, who never observe the creator's works, nor praise him for his mercies, nor pray to him for his favors. But my *Evan*. I am of opinion, that want of piety is want of sense.

*Evan*. True, dear *Ethicus*, it is so. But to what cause will you impute all this criminal insensibility and

various intellect among men, (like the sap of the earth sprung up on its surface) in so many different forms of existence, sets forth both the infinite wisdom and uncontrolled power and sovereignty of the great' Jehovah, who acts in this part of his works, as the God of power and the Author of life and light. But,

3. It is also emblematical of human depravity. For this, like the sap of the earth, springs up in all natural men in different forms ; in some it rises up and bears a dreadful crop of pride and ambition, in others, it produces lechery, of the most abominable and beastly nature. Others again, wallow in infamous drunkenness, and sink themselves beneath the level of the brute creation. In others again, the depravity of human nature is manifested by the sordid vice of covetousness, and cruel niggardliness. And in some, all the black catalogue of infamous vices meet. All these spring from the same source, i. e. from the original corruption of human nature by *Adam's* transgression. And however others among men may be outwardly refined, moralized, and civilized ; yet if they have nothing in them but what nature can produce, their souls are still in the corruption of nature and far from God. And that wonder-working power which draws from the same earth the delicious Cherry Tree, and the poisonous Hemlock, must renew their souls by divine influence, or they are lost for ever. But,

4. God, who makes such a multiform and such an astonishingly different kind of every sort of herbs, plants, trees, &c. from the same earth, can and does, make like difference in the souls of sinners by divine grace. They are all alike involved in the fall, yet from thence he draws an innumerable company of fallen sinners, and plants them in his church to make them shine variously here ; and gloriously hereafter in Heaven. For such wonders divine grace is now performing, and it will continue to do so, as long as the sun and moon shall endure.

and impiety which is manifest in the conduct of the multitude ?

*Ethicus.* To what cause, sir ? Why, to a want, in the first place, of a wise and virtuous education. Second, to the prevalence of evil example, and, Third, to the cherishing bad habits, and the following evil customs.

*Evan.* Certainly sir, I must freely acknowledge to you, that each of the causes which you have mentioned, operate but too powerfully. The want of a good education is certainly a serious evil, and the prevalence of evil example not less so ; and the following bad habits and evil customs are certainly evils which cannot be sufficiently lamented. But in my opinion, you have left out the grand cause, and said nothing at all about it.

*Ethicus.* Dear *Evan.* be so good then, as to say to what cause you impute all these evils ?

*Evan.* I will readily, and am free to tell you, I impute all these evils, and every existing evil to the fall of man from original rectitude, and primitive purity ; and to the desperate depravity of human nature by that fall. *This*, sir, is the *grand* cause of all the evil that is in the world : and but for this, man would now have been as pure, holy, and happy as he was at first ; when he came perfectly blessed into this world, and would have remained as free from every calamity as the angels in heaven now are, and as himself was when he came from his Maker's hands : and then, there would have been none of these evils in existence. This mortifying truth is, you know, abundantly insisted on in the Scriptures,\* that man is a depraved creature. And now, if you please, we will enter on the subject of human depravity.

*Civicus.* Agreed, for I wish to have some acquaintance with this doctrine, for I must own it is new to me.

*Ethicus.* Perfectly agreed, if Mr. *Evangelista* undertakes

\* Psalm li. 5.—Jer. xvii. 9.—Eph. ii. 1.—Jer. xvi. 6. Isa. lix. 7, 8, and many others.

takes to be chief speaker, for I must own, I have not studied this subject, and therefore, I don't wish to go out of my depth.

*Evan.* Well my dear friends, I consent to your wishes ; and I shall begin by observing, that human depravity is manifest in the actions of all, the infant and the youth, as well as in those who are arrived at riper years. All shew by their conduct, that they are, what the scripture says they are, *i. e.* all gone out of the way,† and that there is none that doeth good, *no not one*. The early propensity to anger and wrath in infants, and their as rapid propensities to lying and revenge in childhood ; the strong inclinations to every vice, which our youth manifest, may convince any thinking man that human depravity is an awful truth ; a very mortifying reality, which to dispute would but prove the fact. For, those advanced from youth to riper years, but go on to prove, that the fountain of human nature is corrupt, and from thence the impure streams proceed. Nor is this limited to those who have no religious education, or to those whom bad examples corrupt : for some of the best of men have had the worst of children. A good *Jacob* has had a wicked *Esau* ; a good *David* has had a bad *Abishalom* ; and many good and excellent men since, in every age, as well as in the present, whose children have had the best instructions and the best examples set before them, and yet they have grown up in every vice, and turned out the worst of characters. My good neighbour *Benevolus*, is a striking proof of what I say, he labours with all his might, both in prayer, instruction, and example, to bring up the young ones under his care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; and in a solitary instance or two, he has succeeded happily. But alas ! the majority have grown in vice, as they have grown in years, and dear man, he often laments that he is so unsuccessful ; and says he fears their very learning will become a curse to them ;

† Psalm xiv. 3. & li. 3.—Rom. iii. 12 to 18.



them ; for it appears to him, the more they know, the worse they are. This however, is not the effect of learning, but of the baseness of their naughty hearts. However, this proves the depravity of human nature to a demonstration. And does not the general conduct of all mere natural men manifest the same thing ? Do they not discover the strongest desires to gratify every carnal lust, and every corrupt propensity ? Do not the greatest number by far, live in a total neglect of God, and in open rebellion against him ? Do they not live in a course of swearing, sabbath-breaking, and blasphemy ? yea, in the constant commission of every sin. Is it not manifest to every sensible beholder, that this is the lamentable truth ? It is evident then, that all flesh hath corrupted its way, that human depravity universally abounds, and that all men *by nature*, are corrupt before God : and that the most shameful, and most abominable vices reign predominant in the lives and conduct of most men living. Nor is either childhood or youth any better naturally, and in many, not better practically. Human depravity, therefore, is the disease of all. For all are sinners without exception. All have, and all do transgress the divine law.

*Ethicus.* But my *Evangelista* will have the goodness to explain more particularly, what he means by sin and transgression.

*Evan.* I will. Take notice then, that the divine law is a perfect, pure, and holy rule of eternal justice ; which enjoins but that which is absolutely good and holy ; as well as every way beneficial to man : to obey therefore, was their happiness both present and to come, to disobey, their misery now, and their ruin in future. Therefore, the obedience it required was personal, pure, and perpetual ; both in thought, word, and deed. Consequently, an impure desire\* is a breach of it, for *Solomon* says, The thought of wickedness is sin ; and our Lord intimates the same fact relative

\* Matt. v. 27.

relative to impure inclinations. Therefore the purity of God's law extends even to the thoughts ; and on this account *David* says, I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love. But the divine law takes cognizance of words also, therefore, our Lord says, By thy words thou shalt be justified,† and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. The obedience required by the law of God, consists in purity of thought, and holiness in all conversation ; even a single word not agreeable to its injunctions, is a sin. For sin is a transgression of the law, and an unholy word is a breach of it, an unholy word is consequently a sin : and an action, that in any way contradicts it, must be a transgression. For sin is a want of full conformity to all its requirements. Now this holy law requires us to love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves. Therefore whatever is inconsistent with pure and perfect love to God, whether it be thought, word, or deed, is sin : and whatever is inconsistent with self-love, which we do to our neighbour, whether it be an action, word, or disposition, is also a sin in the sight of God. For be it remembered, that *Secret anger unjust censure*, or any degree of lurking revenge, however secretly we may cloke it, is visible in the sight of God ; and his law forbids it, and commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves.\* The obedience, therefore which alone can be acceptable to God, is perfect love to Himself, and sinless obedience flowing from this divine principle. And the duty to our neighbour, which God requires us to pay, is the same affectionate regard for his person and welfare, as we cherish for ourselves, and such as we would wish them to entertain for us. And every action† which militates against those principles of pure love to God and our neighbour, is a breach of the law ; and the secret disposition which leads to any word or act inconsistent with holy love, is likewise transgression ; and transgression is sin. For, says the Apostle *John*, Sin is the transgression

† Matt. xii. 37.

\* Matt. vii. 12.

† Luke vi. 31.—Matt. xxii. 37 to 40.

imparts. How miserably then are all those who die depending on their own imaginary righteousness and supposed goodness. There is therefore, my *Civicus*, an essential change, a radical renovation absolutely necessary for all the sons of men, in order that they may be saved.

*Civicus*. Pray sir, have the goodness to say what that change is, which you speak of, and by what power it is effected.

*Evan*. I will my *Civicus* ; and let me observe, our Lord calls this change, a *being born from above*. St. *Paul* calls it regeneration,\* and also, a new creation.. St. *Peter* † calls it a being born again ; and in other parts of the new testament true christians are said to be born of the spirit. Now this is not a corporeal, but a mental change ; and it is effected in and on the minds of saved sinners by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and no other power can effect it. By this divine agency, the soul is restored to a sound knowledge of God, and made to see and feel its depravity and ruined condition ; and enabled to look to the Saviour by faith for everlasting life and *to rely on him only for it*. Or in other words, regeneration is a *spiritual begetting* by the power of the Holy Ghost to *faith in Christ* ; and a *dependance on him only for salvation*. And this faith ever includes *mental illumination*, *self-knowledge*, and *self abasement* ; a trusting in, and an entire dependance of the soul on the righteousness, death, and atonement of Christ only, for acceptance with God : casting all other hope away for ever. And also, this divine change is ever manifested by *sound repentance* and *godly sorrow* for sin, and turning from it ; for hereby the *dominion* and *ruling power* of sin is destroyed ; and holiness of heart is implanted, and this faith works by love and purifies the heart. And thus the mighty work is wrought ; and without which work begun and carried on in your soul and mine. my *Civicus*, we can never be saved. For none besides such souls, ever did, or ever can go to heaven.

*Ethicus*,

\* Titus iii. 5.

† I. Peter i. 23.

*Ethicus.* But my dear *Evangelista*, what then, do you damn to the pit of hell all those who because they never pretend to any such thing as regeneration, but who were nevertheless sober, religious and devout, and strictly just towards all men, and who walked humbly with their God; in the same manner as you do the openly profane and flagitious? Surely if you do, you must entertain very unworthy notions of God, who is so gracious and merciful; as to tell us, that to fear him, and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man; and that he requireth nothing of us, but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with him. What would you have us do more? Are not these the words of the Lord himself?

*Evan.* Yes, my *Ethicus*, these scriptures are certainly the words of God, and consequently divinely true, but by the tenor of your queries I am disposed to ask, do you understand them? you asked, if I damned to the pit of hell the sober, religious, devout, &c. who never pretended to any such thing as regeneration. Now, you may remember, that Jesus Christ has answered this query already, and said to us, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.\* So you see 'tis not for opinion, nor for want of making pretences, that men are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, but for want of the saving change which our Lord insists on; and without which you and I are plainly told by him who cannot err, that we shall never be saved. But I say, your queries make me suspect whether you clearly understand those scriptures you have quoted, my *Ethicus*

*Ethicus.* Understand them, *Evangelista*! you do me a fine compliment now, pray are they not too plain to be misunderstood by any man; much less by a philosopher?

*Evan.* I know your philosophy, and respect your scientific understanding, my *Ethicus*, but philosophers† are not always the best divines; nor is sound divinity the

\* John, iii. 3.

† Rom. i. 22, 23.

the offspring of mere human reason ; something greater than philosophy is wanting to make us wise to salvation : and while you use your understanding in these weighty matters, permit me to use mine, while you proceed to give us your comment on these passages which you have quoted ; hereby we shall see if you are more accurately informed than we ; and should that be the case, we should be very glad to be better informed, therefore we will now listen to your observations, if you please.

*Etbicus.* Well, if it will oblige you, I consent. Take notice then, that it appears to me, that God, in these words, is setting before us the line of duty which we are to pursue, and shewing us the condition of our acceptance with him, and describing to us what that obedience is which he will accept from us, if we hereby obtain his favor. Now if we sincerely comply with these requisitions to the utmost of our power, he will reward that obedience with his favourable regards ; and bless such men with everlasting life. But remember, it is sincere obedience, and not feigned, which God accepts ; and for this he rewards the good man with eternal salvation, for he says, do this, and thou shalt live.

*Evan.* Dear *Etbicus*, if this is all your philosophy can do for you, it is manifest that you want a better guide : for though by its lights you can survey the visible heavens, and measure the earth ; yet the glories of the scriptures are hid from your view, and with all your penetration you have not explored the riches of the gospel. Now, though philosophy is excellent and important in its place, yet sacred knowledge is infinitely more so. The former you appear to have a good share of, but the latter you appear to be unacquainted with. Excuse my plainness, for it is a subject so important, that it admits of no palliation or flattery. Therefore I use plainness not to offend, but to benefit you.

*Etbicus.* Dear *Evangelista* speak your mind freely, I give you credence for your good intentions.

*Evan.* Dear *Esthicus*, you are very obliging. And I wish to prove to you, that I would oblige you in the best sense, by pointing out to you the only true way to everlasting felicity. Now please to observe, that had you known the holy scriptures properly, and understood their true import you must have known, that all men by the fall, are become so depraved and guilty, that to be saved by any performances of their own, is as impossible, as for a capital convict to be acquitted by his obedience to be performed in future; or as impossible as it is for an insolvent to satisfy his creditors for past contractions by paying for future commodities. Now notice, there is no truth whatever set forth more plainly in the scriptures, than that of the total depravity of man by nature; the deeply fallen state of all *Adam's* natural offspring, is there as clearly set forth as the light of the sun when there are no clouds. But you, on the contrary, evidently imply, that there is a capability to do what those scriptures you have quoted enjoin. But herein is your great and fatal mistake: for a corrupt sinner can do nothing to please God, any more than a capital offender can merit the king's pardon. And those scriptures which you have referred us to, only point out what men ought to be; and what regenerate souls are made to be by divine grace, when this efficacious change is passed upon them, in proportion as the divine principles thereof prevail in their minds. But you look over all this; and great is your mistake indeed. This proves, that though your philosophy may do much in natural things, it has done nothing for you in spiritual things. Therefore, you want a better guide. Observe also, those scriptures, and all others of the same import, they do not tell us that mere natural men CAN do these things, as you imply; but only shew us what GRACE does when it takes hold of the minds of men. Your doctrine of sincere obedience, therefore, is a NON-ENTITY, or something worse than that; for you make it a condition of eternal life. But the scriptures say, eternal life is the gift of God,† through Jesus Christ our Lord. Your

† Rom. vi. 23.

*conditional sincere obedience, is more fatal than an ignis fatuus in a dark night among pits, precipices, and quagmires; and you will find it to be so, to your everlasting loss, except your error be timely and radically corrected. Was man in a state of innocency, having never fallen into sin, there may then be some reason on your side, and some importance in what you say; but we know this is not the case, for the word of God, and our own observation, and experience, tell us, that man is deeply fallen. Do you not perceive that the word of God declares that we are born in sin,† and shapen in iniquity, and that we go astray as soon as we are born, yea, the divine testimony respecting natural men is, that they are dead in trespasses and sins,§ till quickened by divine grace. And that all who are under the law, (professing sincere obedience to it, to be saved by it) are under the curse;\* and it is very reasonable to conclude that it is so, for you will not say that your sincere obedience is without a flaw, either that which you profess yourself or any other man, for the scriptures tell us again, that there is not a just man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not. Consequently there is not a human being living, or that ever did live, (Christ only excepted) since Adam's fall, who can say his heart and life were always so pure as the law requires; nor that he has always loved God so perfectly and perpetually as he ought; nor that he has always loved and served his neighbour as himself. Then the contrary is true, there is none that doeth good and sinneth not, no not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Short of that glorious and pure obedience which he requires, both respecting himself and our fellow men. Then hear what James the Apostle says, Whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offends in one point, he is guilty of all † He becomes a violator of the whole law. Nothing surely can be more decisive than this is, to shew us that man is a sinner, in himself, condemned and lost; being totally corrupt before God. And as such he can no more reverse*

† Psalm, li. 5.

\* Gal. iii. 10.

§ Eph. ii. 1.

† Jam. ii. 10.

reverse the sentence which God has pronounced against him than a *malefactor* can reverse the sentence of the law he has broken, and for which he is justly condemned to suffer and die, nor can he satisfy the law and justice of God by any supposed obedience of his, any more than one who owes *ten thousand pounds*, can satisfy his creditor by paying *only one farthing*. I hope my *Etibicus*, you begin to see your mistake; and that it now appears evident to you, that a natural man is a corrupt sinner, justly condemned by the holy law of God. That he has *no more natural fitness for heaven*, than an *Ox* has to *live in the Sea*, or a *Fish* to *graze on the Land*. And that therefore, he must be born again or be damned. *Mark*, xvi. 16.

*Etibicus*. You want not arguments, *Evangelista*, to support your opinions, I confess, but yet I am not convinced but that it is still true, that every man must work out his own salvation. Does not the Apostle say as much?

*Evan*. No my *Etibicus*, he does not say this to every man, for he is there speaking to a certain specific number of believers in Jesus, at Philippi,† whose salvation was already wrought out for them, *i. e.* who being redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, had been, in consequence of that, called by grace, united to Christ by faith, and to one another in *christian love* and *church fellowship*; and who consequently were not an *indiscriminate multitude*, but a *particular church of Christ*; devoted to his honor and glory: and his meaning is, that those believers to whom he wrote, should use diligence to discover their own *personal interest* in the salvation which Christ himself had effected for them. For it is not enough (for our comfort) to know that Christ has redeemed all those who believe in him; but every saint wants a *particular discovery* of his own *individual interest* in that redemption; and this blessing is promised, and therefore to be obtained, in the use of appointed means. Now this exhortation of the Apostle is designed to stir up the Philippian Believers  
to

† Phil. ii. 12, 13.



to a diligent use of the means ; that hereby they may obtain that comfort and joy in believing that an assurance of their own interest in Christ would necessarily inspire. And not to teach natural unrenowned men, that it is in their power to effect their own salvation by what you call sincere obedience. Can you suppose that God would accept that which he *forbids* men to offer to him ? Have you never read that the *blemished*, the *lame*, and *deformed*,\* were forbidden of old to be offered to God in sacrifice ? and do you suppose that God is altered now ? Will he *now* accept of *filthy rags* instead of *fine linen* ? Or will he accept imperfection and sin instead of purity and perfection ? Do you not know, or will you not be informed, that man has been put in a state of perfection, but at the trial which put him to the test he fell ? and that thereby he became *absolutely faulty* and condemned ? *Adam*, you know, was the fountain of human nature, his posterity are the streams which flow from that fountain ; and reason will convince you, or any man who will hear reason, that such as the fountain is, such the streams will be which flow from it. If therefore, the fountain is corrupted the streams cannot be pure. A corrupt fountain must send forth impure streams ; for philosophy will convince you, that no effect can rise above its cause. Therefore if the parent of humanity became sinful by transgression, the whole mass of his posterity must have been corrupted in him, and man now cannot be born pure. Pollution is born with every child of *Adam's* family. And reason further confirms the fact, by adverting to the pains and groans of dying infants ; and to the incredible numbers who die under one year's age, as well as to all the other dreadful evils which humanity suffers in consequence of sin. For it is evident that a holy and righteous God does not, and will not punish pure creatures who never offend him, but who are free from all defilement. No, this can never be. But yet we see infants suffer and die, though they have not sinned actually. It is evident then, that the pollution of nature in which every child

\* Lev. xxi. 18. to 21.

child of *Adam* is born, hath in it the seed of every abomination, that ever was or ever will be committed. And therefore, the natural man, like the leper of old, can perform no acceptable obedience to God at all till his leprosy of sin is radically cured by spiritual regeneration. And this is the work of God only, and it is effected solely by his power. Therefore your sincere obedience can have no real existence except in the perverted minds of pharisaical persons. Let me give you a verse to meditate on from the sweet finger of our evangelical Israel.

Wild and unwholesome as the root,

Will all the branches be :

How can we hope for living fruit

From such a deadly tree ?

*Watts.*

*Civiciis.* Dear *Evaneglista*, I am struck with your observations, and now feel pungently their invincible force. I am fully convinced, that both reason and scripture support your doctrine. Besides, I now feel, alas ! the awful witness within, that it is true of myself in particular. I am one of the fallen family of the first *Adam*, and I now see that my nature is as corrupt as you have described it to be. Nor is my life more pure than my nature. O Lord, I am altogether sinful, fallen, depraved, and guilty ! I have broken the whole of thy righteous law, and deserve to suffer for ever, its righteous curse and thy just vengeance. I now no more say, I am as good as any of my neighbours, but feel that I rank with the worst of sinners. And oh ! tell me ! can there be mercy for me ! I have no excellency either of nature or practice, but am defiled and depraved, both by original guilt and actual transgression. If mercy interposes not in my behalf, I see I must perish. I cannot entertain the smallest hope of acceptance with God for any thing I ever did or ever can do. I see, mercy alone, must be all my plea. " God be merciful to me a sinner," suits me now as much as ever it did the poor publican of old, or any poor sinner that ever lived. And if mercy should be shewn to me,

there never was an object more absolutely indebted to it than I shall be, nor any in whom its riches can be more magnified. My dear *Evangelista*, do you think that one so vile as I may obtain mercy?

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, if you feel your need of mercy, and are heartily willing to accept it in God's own way, you cannot be so willing to accept as he is to give. *John*, vi. 37. & x. 11.

*Civicus.* I own that is good news, but my heart trembles while my ears hear the welcome sound; for I think I can say, I am heartily willing to accept mercy on the Lord's own terms, and to be saved in his own way. But say my *Evangelista*, can you tell me the way by which sinners are saved? This is what my soul wishes to know.

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*. Take notice then, that the scripture informs us most amply, that as in *Adam* all his natural seed died,\* so all believers in Jesus (who are his spiritual seed) shall be made alive. The meaning of this is, that all those who see their sin and feel their guilt, and believe in and depend on Christ as a saviour, shall obtain the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. For he came into our world to obey and suffer for all his believing people, *i. e.* for every poor sinner who feels his need of him, and longs to be saved by him, and he has fully effected the work he came to perform for guilty men, and now, by him all that seek salvation from him shall be imparted to them the blessing they seek, even life for evermore. It is for such as you, my *Civicus*, that Jesus died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. Therefore, all those who believe in him, have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. And by him, all who believe in him, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of *Moses*, or any obedience of theirs to any law whatever. And he casts out none who come to him, but saves them to the

\* Rom. v. 16 to 18.—I. Cor. xv. 22.—Eph. i. 7.—Col. i. 14.  
1. John, i. 7.

the uttermost. Never did any sinner, however great his crimes may have been, meet a denial, who went to the Saviour for mercy. And my dear *Civicus* will find his love is still as great, and that in going to the Saviour he will find a hearty welcome. For none ever sought his grace in vain, nor shall my *Civicus* have to say, he sought the Saviour's mercy in vain. Jesus will not deny your suit, no, he will receive you graciously and love you freely. Therefore fear not, but arise and go unto him.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, I own this is delightful news, and my heart begins to feel the dawning of hope, but yet, I cannot divest myself of fear and doubt; and that from a consciousness which I feel of having neglected and despised the blessed Redeemer so long, and so aggravatedly. O my Saviour! I have neglected thee, I have despised thee, and wilt thou have mercy on such a traitor as I have been to thee?

*Evan.* My dear *Civicus* may know the Saviour will not reject him if he will but regard his word. What is it? Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise* cast out. Not on any account, not for any thing whatsoever; though his sins be *red as crimson\** or *black as hell*; they shall be washed away entirely, and his soul shall be white as snow; and he shall be freely and fully justified and accepted; his soul also shall be sealed to the day of complete redemption, and made as happy in the love of God as if he had never sinned at all.† This is what our Saviour would have you to believe; therefore doubt no longer, Jesus calls you, go to him. None have reason to fear, but those who stay away from him, and will not come to him. Therefore be not faithless, but believe and be happy.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, I think my soul now feels determined to rely on the Saviour, to believe in him, and to follow him to death! But ah! I feel I have no strength, nor any ability, but in the language of the evangelical poet, I would venture nigh, saying,  
A guilty,

\* Isaiah, i. 18.

† Rom. viii. 1.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arms I fall.  
Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my all. *Amen.*

WATTS.

*Evan.* Well, my dear *Civicus*, it gives me the most heartfelt satisfaction to hear your happy and blessed resolution. And from this delightful hour, may it be found by my dear friend, that he is become a disciple of Jesus, and a follower of the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; and happy in the Saviour's love. If this is really the case, and I trust it is, O what a blessed walk will this be to you my dear friend; and how happy shall I be that we have thus conversed!

*Civicus.* O that I may realize it! and may my life be from henceforth devoted to him who loved sinners and died for them, and I would hope, for me also. And may the Saviour bless you, my dear *Evangelista*, and cause you to prove, that your labour of love has not been in vain though bestowed on such a poor sinner as I, but may you be rewarded by our Lord a thousand fold. *Amen.*

*Evan.* Amen. I trust your prayer will be granted, both for yourself and me, and that we shall have reason to be thankful for this pleasing, and this agreeable conversation, as long as we live, and that when our time on earth is spent, I hope we shall meet beyond death in eternal glory.

*Civicus.* May the Lord be graciously pleased to grant this, for the Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*

*Evan.* Gentlemen, adieu.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, adieu.

*Ethicus.* Sir, I wish you well.

## DIALOGUE II.

*Second morning's walk and conversation.* 1. **CIVICUS** led further into the depth of his fallen nature. 2. **Is** stripped of all hope and trust in himself; and filled with doubts and fears. 3. At this **ETHICUS** is offended and leaves them. 4. **CIVICUS** is enabled to hope and trust in the Saviour.

**CIVICUS** and **ETHICUS** meet **EVANGELISTA**, and after mutual civility, **CIVICUS** thus began :

**CIVICUS.** Dear *Evangelista*. The weight of your conversation, yesterday morning, is not worn of my spirits. It has left an indelible impression I assure you, and I long to have it renewed.

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, I am very glad to find my conversation had so good an effect; and I trust my hopes will be realized, and your prayers answered; and I hope our conversation will now be renewed to your satisfaction, and our mutual benefit. And you, my *Ethicus*, I hope you also are well disposed to this kind of converse; we were agreeably entertained yesterday morning, and very profitably too. I hope our present will not be less so.

*Ethicus.* Sir, you do me honor, and (thank heaven) I am as well disposed to this converse as before, for you must know I take pleasure in thinking and speaking on divine subjects. And particularly so where reason holds the throne, and the dignity of human nature is properly supported, for I think the powers of reason and speech were given to man that he might communicate to his neighbour of that store of wisdom he may have acquired.

*Evan.* I am ready to admit, that reason, speech, and all the other faculties, were given to us for our neighbour's

neighbour's good as well as our own. And I will grant this to you, that reason is a noble faculty, and the gift of God, and a very great blessing ; but while I grant this to you, hope you will grant this to me, *viz.* that revelation\* is the supreme guide, and that it is the most rational we should submit to its dictates, for you know the Deity speaks here ; and the Almighty cannot falsify, or flatter ; therefore if we speak consistently with scripture, we need not be censured for so speaking ; or if we should, we may safely despise such censure.

*Etbicus.* I own there is truth in what you say, and I am willing your observations to my neighbour *Civicus* should be made without any interruption from mine.

*Civicus.* It can be no interruption to us, dear *Etbicus*, to hear any judicious remarks you may have to make, for these may tend to mutual edification, and that will enliven the discourse, not hinder it.

*Evan.* Certainly Sir, therefore my good friend *Etbicus*, I beg you will be free.

*Etbicus.* I intend now, principally to hear, and I mean to abide by my intention. I may make a friendly remark or two now and then, if you please, but I shall hear chiefly.

*Evan.* Use your freedom and welcome, and I shall do the same. The children of gospel freedom are free indeed, may we each enjoy it in its utmost extent, both now and at all times.

*Civicus.* Amen., That is what I want my *Evang.* I feel I want it, my mind has been so engaged and agitated with the meditation of our past morning's conversation, that I could not sleep in the night. I was led into the depths of my native depravity and corruption, and made to see and feel the truth of your reasoning to such a degree, as I want words to describe. I saw the truth of your assertion, that every man is now, not only a fallen creature, but that the nature

\* II. Peter, i. 11.—II. Tim. iii. 15 to 17.

nature of every human being born into this world, is full of the seeds of every abomination,\* and I am convinced it is my own case; for I see so much of my depravity, that I loath myself before God. Yea, and I perceive clearly, that all my performances are so mixed with sinful infirmity, that I call my best doings but so many *sinning crimes*. I see evidently that it is wholly owing to sovereign mercy that I am not in hell. And I now feel myself so vile, that I am afraid to hope, that one so sinful as I can be saved. It is very clear to me, that the doctrine of St. James is divinely true (as you were observing) that he who offends in one point is guilty of all; has broken the whole law of God, though not in the outward act, yet it is in the fallen heart, and consequently, the holy law of God curses the sinner for it. For I now see also, that the law of God is, as *David* says, so broad that it extends to every thought.† And I see too, that Jesus Christ describes my heart, and the heart of every man born into this world, when he says, Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. Thus I discover likewise, that I am in this sense a violator of every precept of that law, in one way or other, either directly by actual guilt, or indirectly by the nature‡ and consequences of sin. And surely, if ever I am saved, it must be by a miracle of grace! But tell me, dear *Evangelista*, can you believe that a wretch so vile as I, can be saved?

*Evan.* Saved! my dear *Civicus*! Why you are saved already\*\* in the intention and purpose of the great God.§ and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and you have this evidence of it, that it is really so, by your being saved in a happy degree from your native ignorance and self-conceit. This is no small mercy. How came you to know yourself to be  
so

\* Matt. xv. 19, 20.—Jer. xvii. 9. † Psalm, cxix. 96.

‡ Gen. vi. 5.—Prov. vi. 14. § II. Tim. i. 9.

\*\* There is an inseparable connection betwixt sound conviction and salvation; and where the former is real, the latter is certain; for both flow from the divine purpose, however recently discovered.



so vile now, any more than formerly. Lately, you know, you were so good as any of your neighbours, for ought you knew, and were as happy as any of them. But your note is changed it seems, and the reason of this is, because your heart is changed, and because God has shewn you to yourself, and made you see what you really are; and thereby taught you to know yourself, and to see your own true character in his light, by shewing you your picture in the glass of his law. But you know you could not have seen your picture there, if God had not given you eyes to see it. This shews that you are in some happy degree brought out of the night of nature to behold a measure of that saving light which beams from the Sun of Righteousness,\* and enlightens every regenerate soul† who is spiritually born in the new world of saving grace. In the natural world, you know it is impossible to convey the beauty of colours by words, to a man who is born blind, it is absolutely necessary that he be blest with the faculty of sight before he can see, or have any adequate idea of them. So it is in the world of grace. You may tell a man who is in the night of nature, of his own deformity and depravity, and of the beauties and glories of Christ, for ages, could you continue so long, but except God give him a spiritual sight, he will not see his own deformity, nor the beauties of the Saviour. And, consequently, will neither loath the former, nor admire the latter. But you say you see so much of self that you loath it. I am glad of it, nor do I believe you would ever love the Saviour, till you were brought to loath self and hate sin. This, therefore, is a good sign, my dear *Civicus*; but then I would ask, are you willing to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all in the matter of your salvation? For I would observe to you, that a real Christian not only sees that there is no other way of salvation, but is disposed most heartily to approve of Christ as the only Saviour; and has no wish or desire to have any other. But self, and sin, and every thing which stands opposed to Christ, he casts away: and relies on the Saviour only.

Do

\* Mat. iv. 2.—II. Pet. i. 19.

† John. i. 9.

Do you, my *Civics*, thus approve of, and receive the Saviour? He is to his disciples, prophet, priest, and king. Are you desirous to have him such to you? I must say, if your convictions are of the saving kind, as I take them to be; you feel the absolute need of his teaching in order to make you wise to salvation; and of his atonement to do away your guilt; of his righteousness, to justify you; of his spirit, to sanctify you; of his intercession for you in heaven; and of his kingly power and authority to subdue his and your enemies, and to reign in you as he does in the heavenly world. If God has created in your soul such sentiments and feelings as these, no doubt remains of your being brought out of nature's darkness into the spiritual world of grace and light.

*Civics*. I think I can say I understand, in some degree, that Christ is all this to his people which you have mentioned. I know I want him in all these respects myself; and that I must have him as such to me, or I must perish. This I know; and if my heart deceives me not, I think I can say, that with all my powers I approve of Christ, and chuse him as my only Saviour; casting all other confidence away. I would have Jesus for my Saviour, and I desire no other, as far as I know the feelings of my heart; and I would be saved by him from sin and self.

*Evan*. I feel pleasure at what you now relate, my *Civics*, and take it to be evidential of sound conviction, and also of saving illumination. To have this knowledge of Christ, and this approbation of him which you speak of, is to be illuminated by the divine Spirit, to be converted and born again of the Holy Ghost: for surely you did not beget these feelings by your own power, nor could any power but that which is divine bestow them on you. How great then is your mercy!

*Civics*. I own my *Evangelists*, I never had any such views or feelings till your conversation awakened them in me; and then, I did not at first, at all understand you, but was filled with amazement at what you

D

said

said. But while you were reasoning on the fallen condition of man, and his *guilty, depraved, and cursed* state, I began to have these views of myself, which I have now been describing to you.

*Evan.* I am happy to hear this honest confession, and I freely tell you, I really think divine providence directed our foot-steps to take that walk, in the same manner as it directed the Woman of Samaria to the well of old, when the blessed Jesus sat there in waiting till she arrived. You came by when I was walking, that we might enter on our yesterday's converse. She was brought to the well by divine providence, that Jesus might speak to her heart, the words of eternal life; and you were sent by, at the appointed season, when I was sent out to walk, that we might enter on that conversation, and you be benefitted thereby. How wonderful are the ways of our gracious Lord! How deep his counsels! How kind his designs! But now let me whisper in your ear.—I wonder if our friend *Ethicus* has had any of these feelings.

*Civicus.* Indeed I can't say; but I fear not. Do ask him.

*Evan.* I will.—My good friend *Ethicus*, you have heard our conversation, and I dare say have observed what a strange alteration has been made in the feelings and views of our friend *Civicus*. Have you felt any thing like it on your mind, my dear *Ethicus*?

*Ethicus.* I like your conversation for the *most part* very well, Gentlemen. But I cannot say I understand much of those impressions and feelings which my neighbour has expressed. And, indeed! to tell you plainly, gentlemen, the chief thing I concern myself about in religion is, to maintain and keep up a *blameless and reputable deportment* among my good neighbours and christian friends. To be strictly just and upright towards God and my neighbours, is all I aim at, and all I want. As for your religious impressions, I leave to their votaries, and betake myself to a more *rational and judicious* way. I am told in the New Testament  
that

that he who fears God and works righteousness, is accepted of him. And this is my choice, and my practice ; for no man can charge me with any evil. My neighbours may do as they like, but this is my way, and I intend to keep in it.

*Evau.* I am not disappointed at your answer, fir, the sentiments you have now expressed, are just such as I thought you entertained (notice that, my *Civicus*) I thought you were of the self-righteous turn before, and now I find I was not mistaken ; but I sincerely wish I had. For nothing appears plainer to me than this, that you are just in the very spirit and state of the Jews and Pharisees of old, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,\* and despised others. So it appears you do, fir ; but let us remind you, that they were in all probability every way as strictly just and devout as you can be : but for all that, you know, they were severely reprov'd and reject'd by our Lord Jesus Christ. And should you die as you now are, there is every reason to believe, that you will share the same fate. But O that this may never be your case !

*Erbicus.* I will live and die in my sentiments, in spite of all the *nonsense* of all the *enthusiasts* in the world, and abide by the consequences.

*Evau.* Probably you may, and sink to hell to the bargain, for you must not expect to fare better than your predecessors, who, for ought I know, were wiser and better than you. But remember, to them the Saviour said, *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees Hypocrites !† How can you escape the damnation of Hell !*

*Erbicus.* Fine candour this ! I took you to be a man of good breeding, but are these your manners, fir ? Have you nothing but *Damnation and Hell* to fling at those, who though wiser and better than you, are thus rudely treated by you, for a circumstantial difference

\* Luke, xviii. 9.—Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33.

† Matt. xxiii. 13, 14. & 33.

difference of sentiment only. Oh fir ! I am quite disappointed in you, I took you to be a gentleman of candour and liberal sentiment ; but I find I am quite mistaken.

*Evan.* Sir, I should be heartily glad to treat you as a man enlightened of God, and converted to him, as a believer in Christ, and consequently in the way of salvation ; and on that ground, should with the greatest good-will give you the right-hand of fellowship, and now do so, were I not fully convinced I should injure you by so doing. There is such a thing as a friendly severity, and when that is needed, it is the greatest cruelty to withhold it ; and a token of the truest friendship to bestow it. And by that friendship am I now actuated towards you, Mr. *Ethicus*, and because I wish to prevent your going on in a course of fatal error.

*Ethicus.* You may keep this friendship of yours to yourself, fir, I want it not, *I thank God* I have a good heart, and my life is as good as any of my neighbours. Therefore you may as well keep your advice, and give it to some other. For the present I bid you farewell, and return.

*Evan.* Farewell, fir, and I wish you a better acquaintance both with your own heart, the word of God, and the Saviour. Farewell till the judgment day.—Now my *Civicus*, you may see by your neighbour's conduct what your own would be, if like him you were left to your own wisdom. Do you think yourself any wiser or better than he, of yourself.

*Civicus.* No, my *Evangelista*, I am sure I am not. If there is any difference, the *bad* side preponderates in my scale.

*Evan.* How is it then, that you have been brought to know yourself, while he remains ignorant ; seeing he is a man of as good understanding as you, and has had the same means as you, to have his mind informed as yours now is, both of his sin and misery, and of Christ Jesus, the sinner's friend ?

*Civicus.*

*Civicus.* I can give no other reason than this, it is the Lord alone who has made the difference,\* by his illuminating spirit, and of his own mere good pleasure, I can account for it in no other way.

*Evan.* That is the very thing. It is the Lord who has made the difference; you he has enlightened, and he is left to his own supposed wisdom. The divine Spirit has opened your eyes, but his remain as they were; and therefore you *see*, while he remains *blind*. So divinely true is the saying of our Lord, Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.† The one shall be under the influence and teaching of the Holy Ghost, and made wife unto salvation. The other shall be left to himself. He whom divine mercy laid hold on, is directed to the good physician, and his spiritual maladies are cured, but he who is left behind, retains his mental distemper, and is likely to perish in it. On the one hand how great is the mercy to the soul graciously taken; and on the other, how awful is the end like to prove. But this shews that my *Civicus* is a vessel of mercy,\* and a subject of special grace, and now the Lord is making it known to you.

*Civicus.* But let me ask my dear *Evangelista*; may not a man be brought to know and feel this, without being made a partaker of special grace?

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, there can be no doubt but a man might be able to learn the Gospel as a System, and as a System, he might be able to speak of and defend its doctrines. But the learning the Gospel as a System of doctrine, is one thing, and an heartfelt conviction of its reality and importance, is another. I might be led to adopt a sound creed without having my heart affected or my life influenced by it. But when the Gospel is brought home to the mind with effectual power, the soul is enlightened to see its beauty, and made to feel its own absolute need of interest therein

\* 1. Cor. iv. 7.—Psalm, cx. 3.—John, x. 27, 28, & vi. 44.

† Matt. xxiv. 41, 42.

therein; and is hereby inclined† *powerfully* to chose *cordially* this way of salvation which the Gospel reveals in preference to all others, and to die to all other hope. And in this divine mirror, the *glory, suitability, and all-sufficiency* of the Saviour is seen; and also his willingness to save. Thus the soul is *persuaded* and *enabled* to embrace, and rely on him alone for salvation. And be assured, my dear *Civicus*, wherever this is known and felt, there a work of grace is begun. A work that is divine in its origin, operation and completion; for it is wrought by the Holy Ghost. And if my *Civicus* can say he has felt this, I will freely tell him God has begun a good work on the mind of my friend. And if so, may you be able to see it and take courage.

*Civicus*. I believe I may say I have felt all that you have now said, and that my feelings go to the utmost of your observations, my dear *Evangelista*; and hope begins to be a little stronger than it was, but I cannot say without a doubt, that I have felt the important change which our Lord insisted on to *Nicodemus*, but I can say, I love the Saviour, and trust in him, and wish for no other way of salvation. I desire to be saved as a poor, guilty, perishing sinner, to the glory of divine grace and mercy, without any thing of my own. And if I am not deceived by a false heart, I think I desire salvation from every sin as much as I wish for salvation from hell. But can I hope that I have felt that all-powerful change called the New Birth?

*Evan*. Why my *Civicus*, had you these feelings ever since you were born? Did they spring from nature think you? Or did the Adversary give these feelings to you?

*Civicus*. No my dear friend, I had not these feelings by nature, nor ever since I was born, nor do I believe the Adversary either could or would give these feelings to me; and yet I tremble to say I have felt the change called the new creation. *Gal vi. 15.*

*Evan*.

† Rom. ix. 23.—Psalms, cx. 3.—Rev. xii. 17.

*Evan.* But have you not new views of yourself? and new discoveries of the Saviour? Do you not see sin to be odious and hateful, as well as destructive? And, did you not once love it as much as you now hate it? Do you not desire *holiness* from the Saviour, as well as *happiness*? And would you not be like him and live to his glory, as well as be saved by him? Say, my dear *Civicus*, are these your genuine feelings or no?

*Civicus.* I think I can truly say, these really are my genuine feelings and desires; and trust I shall never rest till I have a full realization and enjoyment of all you have been speaking of. But yet, I want more satisfying evidence of my being born again: for I would neither deceive nor be deceived, on this most important subject for a million of worlds. O my Saviour! shew me what I am in thy sight.

*Evan.* O my friend, what an alteration! You, who were lately as good as any of your neighbours; (though no doubt you allowed yourself in many indulgences of a sinful nature, and were best pleased when your corrupt propensities were gratified); now, all these are thought of with sorrow and self-loathing, and deep humiliation, and this is as it ought to be. And say, is not this your case?

*Civicus.* I thing I can say, yes, it really is. But I feel such remnants of latent sin, that make me fear I am not savingly renewed, and this casts me down, for I want to get free from them. I have prayed for it again, and again, but I find sin yet remains. And, will you say that this is consistent with regeneration?

*Evan.* No doubt of it at all.—Yes, my *Civicus*, the regenerate feel this,\* and they will feel more or less of it till they get to glory; and you must expect to share in the trial (for it is a trial) as well to you, as to all the saints. Therefore, this mighty mental renovation, which you have now been relating as your own experience, is actually that very important change which the scriptures call a *new creation*, or a *being born again*. There is created in you, by the power of the divine

\* Rom. vii. 9, to the end.—Gal. v. 7.—I. John, i. 8.



divine Spirit, a knowledge of yourself as a lost perishing sinner, which very lately you had not : also a knowledge of the Saviour as he is revealed in the Gospel : and of the Lord, as a sin-forgiving God through him ; whom to know is life eternal. Very lately you were as ignorant of all this, as the beasts that perish. Moreover, there is a hatred to sin, and a love to holiness imparted to you ; and what is yet more, there is a hearty love to the Saviour, and the most cheerful willingness to obey him, as well as to be saved by him, given to you. Do you not feel your soul thus *powerfully inclined and disposed* ?

*Civicus.* At least I can say, I think I do, and that I cannot be satisfied without this.

*Evan.* Then let the words of the Apostle *John* decide your case ; *Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.\** You feel love to God, which will not let you rest without a likeness to God ; this shews the reality of the divine change. Surely then, the new creation is begun in you, and you are passed from death unto life : and the same hand which began the work,† will carry it on and finish it. But before I have done, I wish to recall to your remembrance, that saying of our Lord ; *Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.* Mercy, my dear *Civicus*, took hold of you, and left *Ethicus* to follow his own ways ! The consequence was, you know, he left us ; and St. *John* tells you the reason, *he went out from us, because he was not of us.‡* That's the reason ; but oh ! wonderful grace to you ! And what an awful judgment to him ! But the Lord of all does right, both in the methods of his grace, and the judgments of his hand. Let my dear *Civicus* learn to adore that mercy by which he is distinguished from pharisees and hypocrites, who place all their hopes on empty notions, and who, consequently, remain in the congregation of the dead. And while we are called

to

\* I. John, iv. 7.

† Phil. i. 6.—Rom. viii. 36, to the end.—John, x. 28.

‡ I. John, ii. 19.

observe the wonders which grace has performed for you, and for me, let us try if we can tune our hearts and our voices, to celebrate the high praises of our gracious and merciful God and Saviour, in singing the following Hymn. I persuade myself, that it is suited to your feelings, and that it will enliven your soul, expand your powers, and make your heart to be musical with Jehovah's praises.

### H Y M N.

*The awakened Sinner's confession and comfort.*

- 1 MOST kind and gracious Lord,  
My guilt I now confess ;  
I have thy holy laws abhor'd,  
And madly scorn'd thy grace.
- 2 I was conceiv'd in sin,  
And born a child of wrath ;  
And all my actions have been in  
The road that leads to death.
- 3 Averse to all that's good,  
And prone to all that's ill ;  
In love with sin, I hated God,  
And serv'd the prince of hell.
- 4 Thus in my mad career,  
The downward road I ran  
Regardless how I should appear  
Before th' eternal Throne.
- 5 But blessed be his name !  
His grace preserv'd me still ;  
Till he my enmity o'ercame,  
And turn'd my stubborn will.
- 6 All glory to the Lord,  
His matchless love and grace  
Has on my sinful soul bestow'd,  
Free pardon, life, and peace.
- 7 Eternal praise be given  
To our redeeming King :

Let



Let all the Saints in earth and heav'n,  
His great salvation sing.

8 'Twas Christ's own sovereign love,  
That turn'd my stubborn heart,  
And made my soul his grace approve,  
And bid my curse depart.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, I thank you for this Hymn. I can sing it with all my heart, for it expresses the very feelings of my mind; one would think you had made it on purpose. I feel every line of it applies to my case, one would think your case had been similar to my own

*Evan.* As face answereth to face in a glass,\* so the heart of man to man; and the case of one christian is often pourtrayed by that of another; this is exactly the case here. These lines were the feelings of my own mind more than twenty years ago, and many, and many a time since. For I too have reason to complain with you, that I have not got rid of the remnants of a body of sin. Nor am I yet out of the reach of the darts of Satan; nor have I any innate strength of my own to overcome him; but sometimes I can; I am strong in divine strength, I never can be strong in any other. II. Cor. xii. 9.

*Civicus.* Indeed! What, my *Evangelista* feel like this?

*Evan.* Just so, I assure you, for I have the same sort of heart as you have.

*Civicus.* Then I trust I have the experience of a christian. For my case has been now expressed by yours most exactly. Oh! how good to have the counsel and conversation of a christian friend! I could not have thought any good man ever felt like me, but now I find you do. It is a comfort to know my case is not singular; and from this happy moment I trust I shall retain a sense of the love and mercy of my Saviour, to me the vilest and chiefest of sinners.

*Evan.*

\* Prov. xvii. 19.

*Evan.* I am truly happy to find I have been in any measure the helper of your joy. May you now go on in divine strength, looking to the Saviour, for remember your strength is in him, and not in yourself; and while he upholds your goings you will be safe. Look to him and depend upon him for all you want; and all your real wants will be supplied. We must now part, time reminds us of our duty and our callings, and to that we must now attend. But let us meet on the next Sabbath at the House of God: and there I hope we shall enjoy his gracious smiles, and be cheered with his heavenly love. Till then I bid you adieu.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, adieu.—But let me have a share in your supplications at the divine Throne.

*Evan.* Let that be mutual, my dear Friend. *Amen.*

### DIALOGUE III.

*On the Sabbath Morning* CIVICUS meets EVANGELISTA at the House of God.\* And before worship began, they discoursed as follows:

*CIVICUS.* Dear *Evangelista*, I am thankful for being spared to see the beginning of a new Sabbath to me, and for that I have met you here. But I freely own I resemble a person ushered into a new world, rather than an inhabitant of Zion; but I am happy to be brought hither at last, and very glad to meet you in this place.

*Evan.* I partake of your pleasure, my Friend, and am

\* *Evangelista*, agreeable to his name, was a Christian Preacher, in a Church of the primitive order, where there is a *stated Pastor*, and a number of pious and gifted members, whom God has qualified to preach the Gospel, and the Church approved for that work. Our Friend *E.* is one of them.—But we confess that this shows what the Churches *ought* to be, rather than what they *are* in general at present.—See *Acts*, xiii. 1, 2, 3.

an equally happy to find you here. And, may the Lord or Sabbath shed his heavenly influence on each of us, and the congregation at large : and make *this* a delightful anticip of the eternal Sabbath.

*Cecilia*. Amen. Lord grant it. I humbly pray thee, for thy name sake. And grant we may be royally fed and entertained in thy house this day.

But my *Evan*. Being such a novice, I fear I shall be awkward in your mode of worship. I hope you will excuse that. Pray who is your minister to-day ?

*Evan*. As to the former, you may well be easy, for our mode of worship has no intricacies in it, and you will find it easy to practice. And as to the latter you may well excuse me. for your eyes will soon convince you who the minister is. Seek the divine presence and assistance, and you will be usefully employed.

*Cecilia*. I beg pardon my *Evangelista*, I understood not your honorable character till now ; for you wear no canonicals.

*Evan*. No pardon is wanted where no transgression is committed ; and as for the useless canonicals, we leave to our neighbours, and covet only the ornaments of grace, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

*Cecilia*. I feel real pleasure at this information, and like it all the better ; for these are the ornaments which God approves, and that is best of all ; but the other ornaments may be disgusting to him, for aught I know. But I hope now I am come to the Mountain of Myrrh, and the Hill of Frankincense ; to be delighted with sacred odours, and refreshed with the good wine of the kingdom.

*Evan*. May it be proved to be so, by you, and all present.

*Cecilia* is now put into a convenient sitting, and *Evangelista* retires to the Vestry for a short space.—  
Now he ascends the Pulpit, and gives out the following

HYMN.

H Y M N.

- 1 SOURCE of everlasting love,  
Send thine influence from above ;  
Now diffuse thy grace abroad ;  
Raise our souls to thee, O God.  
That with pleasure we may taste  
The delicious gospel feast :  
Here let every waiting mind,  
Soul-reviving comfort find.
- 2 Thine unchanging boundless love,  
Sent the Saviour from above,  
To redeem the guilty race,  
Who had forfeited his grace :  
For poor sinners, such as we,  
Jesus bled upon the tree.  
Let us now by faith embrace  
Christ, and all his goodness taste.
- 3 This we know belongs to them,  
Whom the Saviour did redeem ;  
They who feel the pow'r of grace  
Drawing them to seek his face :  
And we trust this day to see,  
We like them, now blest shall be ;  
And, adorn'd in his rich vest,  
Now shall eat the gospel feast.
- 4 Blessed Saviour, let us be  
Daily growing like to thee ;  
Till in glory we appear,  
All its blessedness to share :  
And, while we are on the way,  
Visit us in love each day :  
And, when we shall breathe our last,  
Bring us to the heav'nly feast.

All the while the Hymn was singing, *Civics* was  
earnly attentive, and appear'd to be greatly de-  
lighted.

E

*Evangelista*



*Evangelista* now read one chapter out of the old testament, and another out of the new. During which time *Cirvius* was all attention. Then *Evangelista* began his Prayer without any precomposed form, and to the following effect.

### THE PRAYER.

**H**EAVENLY Father, we approach thy gracious throne in the acceptable and all prevailing name of Jesus, our great Mediator, and kind intercessor; believing that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus: we offer our adorations and petitions to thee through him. We adore and worship thee, O Lord, as our creator, and kind and constant benefactor. Thou holdest our souls in life. Thy visitation preserves our spirits. To thee we now look for all that merciful and gracious aid, we stand in need of, at this time, to enable us to worship thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. We confess we have no worthiness at all to plead before thee, for we are guilty and depraved creatures, both by nature and by practice. Our natures are corrupt, and our lives have been unholy, ever since we had a being. And it is to thy mercy alone, that we are indebted for our preservation from ruin, from death and from hell. Our best performances are so much mixed with our sinful infirmities, that we cannot say of any one of them, *behold this is pure*. We cannot boast of any goodness that we have done, or that we can do; but we must confess, our vileness and our guilt is such, that we have not only made ourselves sinful and guilty, but have thereby rendered ourselves weak and incapable of doing any thing to deserve thy notice, or to save ourselves. Our hearts are unclean, our words have been unholy, and our actions have been constant transgressions of thy holy and righteous law. Therefore, as sinners condemned and ready to perish, we come with the publican's prayer, *God be merciful to us sinners*. O pardon our crimes, forgive our guilt, and shew every seeking sinner now present, thy great salvation.

salvation. And any soul brought to a knowledge of himself and of thee, let such now be enabled to behold thee as their God ; and reveal to them thy covenant love, and let them read their title clear to mansions in the skies ; and may thy peace fill their souls. Feed all thy children now present, with thy heavenly manna, and let them drink largely of the wine of thy kingdom. Strengthen the weak, comfort the feeble-minded, raise up the down-cast, and deliver the tempted soul from the power of the Adversary. Restore backsliders, and such as feel thy frown, and mourn thy absence, let them now be favoured with thy smiles. Chase darkness from the doubtful, clear the views of the wavering, and confirm them in the full belief of thy truth. And let those who are rejoicing in thee, be at thy feet in humility while their joys are increasing. Convert the careless, and give repentance to the rebellious, and let sinners of every description now feel thy new creating power, and turn and live. To this end clothe thy word with the energy of thy Spirit, and let all present feel that God is with us of a truth. Give us a reviving season, and shew us that this is to us thy time of love ; and make this the best Sabbath to us that ever we enjoyed. Let the Speaker feel thine assistance, and do thou fill his soul with heavenly treasure, and help him to give a word in season to every soul, which shall be properly fitted to their every necessity, and well suited to their several cases : thou knowest the wants of all, and thou canst give a suitable portion of spiritual meat in due season. To thee we now look for a full supply of all our real wants. Spirit of the Lord, breathe on these slain, that they may live, and then they shall live to thy glory. In like manner bless all the assemblies of thy saints, in every place throughout the world. May the divine influences be largely poured on all thy ministers and people. The Lord bless them through all the earth. May God in his mercy look on the world lying in wickedness, and save them from the bondage of sin and Satan. Overturn the kingdom of hell in every part of the world, and let all men be speedily freed from.



from all its influence and injuries in every respect: and let thine own most blessed kingdom come, and thy will be done, on the earth, as it is in the heavenly world. Put an everlasting end to war, and the shedding of human blood, and teach all men to live in unity, peace, and love. Let universal friendship bless the whole earth. May human governments be founded in righteousness and true justice, all over the world. May our own be especially so: and our country hereby become a happy nation. May our rulers, both supreme and subordinate, be men of God, men of justice, mercy, and faith. May the people be reformed and evangelized; and thy churches in our land be revived, edified, multiplied, and prospered, and made to grow in grace, gifts, and numbers. May all the earth be blessed with the gospel's joyful sound. And may we and ours be all partakers of thy salvation. Let this be a pentecostal season to our souls, and a foretaste of the blessedness of the heavenly world; and a pledge of our being brought thither, in thine own time and way. Pardon all our short-comings, and bless us above all that we can ask or think, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who loved sinners and died for them; and whom we worship, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the one living and true God, to whom be ascribed the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever. *Amen.*

During prayer, there was a general solemnity and fervor, and *Civics* appeared to be peculiarly cordial and devout.

They now sung, to the praise of God again, the following

#### H Y M N.

- 1 GREAT God, thy matchless nature is  
A fountain of infinities!  
Transcending thought! beyond the sight  
Of men, and all the worlds of light!
- 2 With thee is perfect holiness,  
And everlasting life and bliss;

Thy

Thy grace confers eternal joy,  
On all who to the Saviour fly.

- 3 Most pure and holy is thy name,  
Thy wonderous works are all the same ;  
Thy boundless grace hath depth and height,  
Beyond all thought 'tis infinite !
- 4 Thy judgments are a mighty deep,  
Thy justice does her reign still keep :  
When on thy foes thy terrors light,  
Thy work is pure, thou doest right.
- 5 All things are present to thine eye,  
Through time and to eternity ;  
Thy purpose fix'd, unmov'd remains ;  
And changeless are thy great designs.
- 6 Eternal King ! thyself reveal ;  
Open to us thy written will.  
Now while we at thy foot-stool sit,  
My we the heavenly manna eat.

## THE SERMON.

LUKE, xv. 4, 5.

*What man of you, having an hundred Sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it, and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.*

**I**N this chapter, it is evident, that our blessed Lord speaks of his elect and redeemed people under the similitude of Sheep ;\* and holds forth to us, their natural state, under the idea of *lost Sheep*. Now this is the exact similitude of their state and character, by nature and practice : they are a part of the great family of fallen *Adam*, and as such, are straying like lost Sheep.

\* John, x. 15.—26.

Sheep, as the rest of mankind are. And, were they not fought out, and brought back to the fold of Christ, by his own power and wisdom, they would wander eternally, and never find their way to happiness or heaven. But, being the objects of the Father's choice, they are likewise of the Son's redemption, and they must therefore become the habitation of God the Spirit. For, as a Shepherd who has a flock of Sheep, composed of a certain, specific, and definite number, so are these. And as the Shepherd knows well if but one of his Sheep is missing; and as he sets a value on them all, he will send and fetch the one that is gone astray, and cause it to be again incorporated with the flock, and again to rest in the same fold; just so it is with Christ and his straying Sheep. Only this is to be noticed here, the parable speaks of an individual Sheep, but the individual is the emblem of all the whole flock of Christ, for they have all gone astray without exception. And therefore, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, has undertaken to find every one of them himself. And that this may be fully effected, he has, in the first instance, redeemed them by his own most precious blood, from the hand of sin-avenging justice,\* and the curse of a broken law,† under which by their sin they had fallen. And now being redeemed, they are his own peculiar property. Therefore he calls them emphatically *his Sheep*. And they are his by the Father's donation, and his own purchase; therefore they are his, both by power and purchase. And this being the case, he will have every one of them. *All that the Father giveth me,§ says he, shall come to me, &c.* The price of his blood, then, shall be the jewels of his crown, and that crown he shall eternally wear; and the joys of his kingdom *they* shall eternally share. And, though infidels may laugh, and the pharisees may murmur and rail; now as well as of old; yet the sheep of Christ are safe; nor shall any one of them fail of that inheritance|| to which they are chosen.

But

\* Eph. i. 7.

Col. i. 14.—Heb. x. 12.

† Gal. iii. 12.

§ John, 6.—37.

|| John, x. 26, 27.

But, for order's sake, I intend to speak on my text in the following way.

I. Notice the compassion of the great Shepherd.

II. Observe the state and condition of his Sheep.

III. Notice the joy of the Shepherd, at the recovery and restoration of his Sheep.

*First* then, I am to notice the compassion of the great Shepherd. And here I must say, it is the compassion of a God. Yes, our great Shepherd is also the everlasting God,\* the maker of all things, the preserver of all things, and the judge of quick and dead.† And therefore, he doth in heaven and on earth whatever pleaseth him. He has all power in his hands, and therefore, if his love resolves to bless, his power is able to effect and confirm the grace. The compassion of our divine Shepherd, must therefore, be infinite. We, who are the Sheep of his pasture, have a Shepherd who has boundless compassion. And though millions of redeemed souls have been drinking of this fountain for ages and generations successively, they have not lessened it a single grain, and when unnumbered millions more shall have drunk at it to eternal ages, this compassion shall remain the very same as when it was manifested to the first redeemed soul. For our Jesus is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.‡ And his divine compassion is an infinite ocean without bottom or shore; it can neither be exhausted nor lessened; no, not to eternity. But as it *was*, it is *now*, and *ever will be*, the fountain of living waters, that cannot possibly be diminished one single drop, though unnumbered millions are eternally drinking at it! They drink, and never cease, but are constantly drawing from it full draughts of perfect pleasure. And this compassion has fixed upon *you*, ye *sin-sick souls*! It has made *you* its objects and therefore *every one of you* will be by it made forever happy. And this happiness shall be *ever growing, without lessening*.

\* John, i. 1, 2, 3.

† Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

‡ Heb. xiii. 8.

*lessening* the fountain that feeds it. Think of this and be glad. All other supplies waste the original, but this is a fountain of infinite store, which cannot be diminished, no not in the smallest degree. Oh ! how rich then, are all they who are replenished from hence ! And what a superlative misery, not to be acquainted with it ! But you who have just begun to set out in the divine life, see to what a *fair* and *full* inheritance you are born : and it is reserved in heaven for you, and ye are kept by the power of God, and comforted by the way with delightful and refreshing draughts, till at last ye shall all come to enjoy the full possession. Oh ! then, lift up your eyes and see the fair country to which you are going, and let your hearts and voices sing for joy, in the sweetest notes of love and praise, for your perfect blessedness draweth nigh. Let not any one say, that his case is too bad for him to be made acquainted with the sweets of divine compassion ; for that cannot be ; because, the sin and guilt of the *very worst living*, or that *ever lived*, is but *finite*, and produced by the power of a creature, who is vastly limited in his powers : but divine compassion is infinite in its nature, and boundless in its duration. There is, therefore, no room for doubt or discouragement, but matter of joy and praise, for every one who feel his want of it. But in the next place,

2. I would observe, that the compassion of our great Shepherd, is as free as it is full ; it is not to be purchased by human merit, but it respects those only who have nothing to bring.\* The poorer the wretch, the welcomer guest : the undone and lost, are the objects of its benevolence, for its designs are to make poor sinners rich, and miserable sinners happy. Proud Pharisees are rejected, as the whole tenor of this context will shew ; but poor publicans, who feel they are such, are its welcome guests : therefore, no penitent sinner need fear, for our good Shepherd will cast out none of his straying ones, who wish to return.

\* Isaiah. liv. 1, 2.

etern. All who come begging an interest in his free-  
 avour are sure to find the most cordial welcome, and  
 the arms of his compassion are ever open to receive  
 them. And those who come, are cleansed in the fountain  
 it has opened for sin and uncleanness; the filthiest are  
 purified, and the guiltiest are freely and fully par-  
 doned and justified. His compassion invites the most  
 sinful of the human race, to come and partake freely  
 of full justification, free pardon, adoption, and sanctifi-  
 cation, and complete and eternal happiness. Let me  
 now give you a very suitable verse in this place.

Come needy, come guilty,  
 Come loathsome and bare ;  
 You can't come too filthy,  
 Come just as you are.

HART.

This is certainly a true, and very evangelic verse ;  
 therefore I quoted it here, as a suitable illustration of  
 what I have been saying above. It contains the  
 very nature of the gospel invitation to poor sinners, and  
 is expressive of that compassion of which I have been  
 speaking. And be assured that Jesus sends this invi-  
 tation to every one of you now present, who are wish-  
 ing to partake of the benefits of his salvation. Stay  
 away no longer then, but come now, and partake of  
 the riches of infinite compassion. But in the next  
 place,

3. It is changeless compassion. Those who are  
 now the objects of its benevolence shall remain such  
 forever. It is not a temporary regard that it pays to  
 its objects, but it is eternal life which it gives them,  
 and they shall *never perish*, says our divine Shepherd.  
 The designs which this compassion forms respecting  
 any one of *Adam's* fallen family, remain the same  
 from eternity to eternity, and the blessing it bestows  
 is *everlasting life* ; nor can they be dis-inherited by any  
 power or adversary whatever. Therefore your fears  
 of falling into perdition by some adversary or other,  
 are all groundless. Ye weak believers ; ye Lambs of  
 his fold are as dear to him as the Sheep of his pasture ;  
 for

again felicitate your spirits. The Lord may make you feel the smart of broken bones, and cause you to feel all the pains of so distressing a state : yet, remember, that his love is still the same, and that he hates putting away ; and therefore will not put away the backslider who returns to him. He says to such, *Take with you words, and return unto the Lord, and he will receive you graciously and love you freely.*† He knew well what you would be, and that you would turn aside in the manner you have done, but that knowledge hindered not his eternal choice, and this offence of yours, shall not break off his love in time. Therefore, backsliding soul, think thus with thyself ; the Lord does all this to make thee *loath* thy sin, and thyself on account of thy sin. But his love to thee is *still as great* ; Jesus remembers Calvary, and do not thou forget ; thy soul was redeemed by that precious blood which was there shed, to take away thy sin. Thy soul is still the *purchase of blood divine*, and being so, soon in glory thou shalt reign, in robes as pure and resplendent as any of the happy inhabitants there. This is the conclusion that mourning backsliders should make, and not give way to despair and doubt ; the victory is not to be won by *doubting* and *despair*, but by *faith* in the Saviour's *love* and *grace*. Therefore, mourning backslider, be not faithless but believing.

*Objection.* But perhaps you will say, my backsliding is attended with such peculiar aggravations, that I cannot believe such a sinner as I can be restored, or that pardoning mercy can ever be shewn to one so vile as I. *Answ.* It is *not possible* for any but the *wilful* and *finally impenitent*, to be too great a sinner to be pardoned. The greatest of this sort of criminals have been restored and pardoned, as is manifest from many examples in scripture ; and therefore, *you may* ; for Christ's love is still as great, and his blood *now* cleanseth from *all sin* ; *that* sin, as well as any other. Therefore, say not, ye cannot be restored, for surely ye may. Cast not away, therefore, the hope and confidence in restoring mercy, which before this you may have had, -but

† Hosea, xiv. 8

but lay hold of it, believing in it, and depending on it.

*Objection.* But perhaps some may say, I have brought a *public reproach* on the gospel, and the ways of God ; I, therefore, can have no right to hope ; or if I might, I should be *ashamed* to associate with the people of God, because I have disgraced his ways, and become a reproach to them, and they will always *look on me* with an *evil eye*.

*Answer.* What then, because you have taken *some* wrong steps, are you determined to take yet more *fatal ones* ? True, it is matter of great grief and lamentation, that you should have thus fallen ; but remember you can never mend the matter by your unbelief, nor by your staying from the assemblies of the saints, but by cherishing hope, ye will renew your courage, and be enabled to overcome *sinful shame*, and to appear again among the saints. And remember, every *self-knowing* and *Christ-loving* soul, will rejoice at your restoration, and be glad with all their hearts at your recovery. And besides, your staying away, only deepens the wounds already made in your soul, and on the ways of God. But your recovery will be a mean of wiping away that reproach, and of restoring peace and prosperity to your mind, and ye may be an instrument of good to others in similar circumstances. This is by no means impossible. Remember it therefore, and take courage ; and for your comfort, venture to believe, that divine compassion can restore and heal you, and manifest to you how greatly it can pardon.\* And nothing hinders but your staying at a distance. Oh ! therefore, *return ! return !* and Jesus will receive you.

*Objection.* But perhaps another may say, I have sinned so *repeatedly* against the *clearest light*, and the *greatest mercy*, that I cannot hope. I answer, the sins of all backsliders are against light, and against mercy, and yet backsliders are invited to return to the Lord, and

\* Psalm ciii. 8.—12.—17.



and he promises to heal them : and tells them, *he is married to them*, and that, *he hates putting away*. It is manifest, none need object, or be objected to, who desire to return. Those *only* who are determined to revolt more and more, and who have no wish or desire to return, have every thing to fear : these may well fear the most tremendous curies of the Almighty. But those who loath their sin, and long to return, shall surely find mercy. The Lord calls them his children, and commands them to return, and tells them he will receive them graciously, restore comforts to them, and love them freely. Not that he *hates* them now, it is their *sin* that he hates. Nor that he *now begins* to love them : no, that was from everlasting, but he manifests his free and eternal love. Besides, the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all sin*. From all sin without exception, and therefore every species of backsliding, as well as other sins, are purged away by this precious sin-cleansing blood. Therefore, no returning backslider has any reason to fear a rejection.

But I come now to another part of my subject, which is,

*Second*, to notice the state and condition of the Sheep.

And in the first place, I observe ; that their condition, naturally, is a corrupt and degenerate one. They, as well as all others, are the guilty offspring of fallen Adam, and are by nature children of wrath, even as others.<sup>+</sup> It is evident then, that the natural state of Christ's Sheep, is equally as bad as that of other men. And indeed it must be so, for they are the degenerate branches of a degenerate vine ; for such as the vine is, such will the branches be. And, alas ! we have no need of a course of arguments to prove this truly awful fact, for the conduct of them all, till divinely renewed, sufficiently proves this. We conclude, therefore, on the clearest evidence, that all the people of God themselves, are by nature, in a state of sin ; in a corrupt and guilty state, and their nature of itself, as unholy and impure as that of all other men,

<sup>+</sup> Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.

men, or as that of those who die in sin, and are eternally lost. It is past all doubt, that all men by nature, are alike guilty and corrupt; those who are called by grace, as well as those who are left to perish in their sin. Consequently,

2. Their natural state is not only a corrupt and guilty one, but it must also be a *curst* one. The very nature of the thing will evince this; for the curse follows guilt, as naturally as darkness follows the departure of the sun's rays, and as certainly as the night succeeds the day. Therefore the Apostle says to the Galatians, that *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*. For us, who by converting grace are now taught to believe in him who redeemed us. The believers at Galatia, and all believers in the world, are by nature under the curse, but redeemed from it by the blood of Christ. The curse of the law fell on all men alike, in consequence of the first sin, and the redemption which is in Christ, is alike in its benefits, on all who believe. All those in whom sinful nature rules, are *alike under the curse*, and those in whom grace rules, it reigns in them to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For, if the people of God had not been under the curse by nature, they had not needed a redeemer to rescue them from that curse. It is evident then, that the curse of the law, in consequence of sin, has fallen on *all* Adam's offspring alike, and without exception, for Christ died to redeem his people from the curse. But I will say, in the next place,

3. It is a wandering and straying state. Men are all gone out of the way, and they do nothing but go farther and farther, till all-powerful grace calls them back from their wanderings, and a divine change is wrought in them; and they are subdued by heavenly grace. They stop not in their wanderings till born from above, or cut off in their sins. This is the case of all. Hence the various rounds of dissipation among the carnal world; their revels and routs, their cards, dice, public amusements, and I know not what; an  
endless

endless round of one sort or other of vain and criminal diversions, to try to make themselves happy. But all these pursuits are vain and unavailing, because they lead them from God instead of bringing them to him; and only prove how much they are disposed to wander from the right way. So likewise, if we notice the various false doctrines, and lying pretences, which have been made by men of corrupt minds, who have taught that they only are in the right faith, and have condemned all others who differ from them; but who, nevertheless, have taught some of the vilest absurdities that a depraved mind could utter. And many of them having begun to wander from the truth they formerly seemed to embrace, never cease wandering till they have strayed through all the various systems of delusion and error which deceived men have propagated, till at last they turn deists, and end in apostasy; casting of all pretences to religion. This also serves to shew that men are naturally wanderers from God, and will remain so for ever, except divine grace renew them. This mortifying doctrine is as applicable to Christ's Sheep before their conversion, as to any others of mankind; for they, as well as others, wander till Christ calls them back, and puts them into his own fold. But I remark,

4. It is also a miserable state.\* Men naturally think they are, in a religious sense, rich and increased in goods; though, alas! this only proves their spiritual poverty, for they are poor, and wretched, and blind and naked, and know it not: and this ignorance is a prolific source of misery; and by it they are out of the way of true happiness, though they vainly suppose they are in it. Consequently, they are ever pursuing it, where it can never be found; they spend their time and strength, and property also, for nought, and in vain. They are ever labouring, only to increase their misery. Their ignorance of the right way to real felicity, is a mean of puffing them up with wrong notions and vain conceits. They know nothing as they ought

\* Rom. iii. 16.—Rev. iii. 17.

ought to know, and their pride will not suffer them to be instructed, they conceit they know as well as any of their neighbours, and their supposed knowledge leads them perpetually wrong: their imagined light is darkness, and by it they are drawn into greater misery, in these very ways in which they vainly expect to find happiness. This their way is their folly, and their folly makes them transgressors, and the way of transgressors is hard. Yea, such is their mental blindness, that they account true wisdom madness, and the way to heaven the road to infelicity and dishonor; and this leads them into everlasting disappointment. Therefore, in this sad state, they can never know peace, though they ever seek it, they never find it, because they seek it where it can never be found. this is truly a miserable state: but miserable as it is, it is the very condition of all mere natural men; for all the sons of fallen Adam are born in this condition, and in it they remain, till God is pleased of his own goodness to bring them out of it, and to turn their feet into the way of peace. Consequently,

5. They are, while in a state of nature, in the worst of bondage, even a slavery to their lusts, they are tied and bound with the chains of their sins:† and these, alas! are strong chains indeed! But sinners being out of the way of life and peace, must be perpetually going farther and farther in the road to everlasting wretchedness. And to this they are impelled by the impetuosity of their corrupt propensities; and these make them the willing slaves of their grand Adversary: and thus their chains are rivetted on them by their own corrupt inclinations. And alas! they prove at last, that no slaves are so slavish, as those who put on their own fetters. But this is the slavery of all those who are governed by their lusts, and none are free from their influence, but those who are born again of the divine Spirit. Therefore, this miserable condition is the state of all natural men.

But

† Prov. v. 22, 23.

and with his eyes and heart, and with his hands and feet, and with his whole soul, and with his whole mind, and with his whole strength, and with his whole power, and with his whole might, and with his whole glory, and with his whole honor, and with his whole dominion, and with his whole kingdom, and with his whole empire, and with his whole majesty, and with his whole greatness, and with his whole excellence, and with his whole beauty, and with his whole grace, and with his whole love, and with his whole mercy, and with his whole compassion, and with his whole kindness, and with his whole gentleness, and with his whole meekness, and with his whole lowliness, and with his whole humility, and with his whole modesty, and with his whole simplicity, and with his whole purity, and with his whole holiness, and with his whole righteousness, and with his whole truth, and with his whole faith, and with his whole hope, and with his whole charity, and with his whole peace, and with his whole joy, and with his whole life, and with his whole death, and with his whole resurrection, and with his whole ascension, and with his whole sitting at the right hand of the Father, and with his whole coming again to judge the living and the dead, and with his whole reign of glory and honor forever and ever, Amen.

And with his eyes and heart, and with his hands and feet, and with his whole soul, and with his whole mind, and with his whole strength, and with his whole power, and with his whole might, and with his whole glory, and with his whole honor, and with his whole dominion, and with his whole kingdom, and with his whole empire, and with his whole majesty, and with his whole greatness, and with his whole excellence, and with his whole beauty, and with his whole grace, and with his whole love, and with his whole mercy, and with his whole compassion, and with his whole kindness, and with his whole gentleness, and with his whole meekness, and with his whole lowliness, and with his whole humility, and with his whole modesty, and with his whole simplicity, and with his whole purity, and with his whole holiness, and with his whole righteousness, and with his whole truth, and with his whole faith, and with his whole hope, and with his whole charity, and with his whole peace, and with his whole joy, and with his whole life, and with his whole death, and with his whole resurrection, and with his whole ascension, and with his whole sitting at the right hand of the Father, and with his whole coming again to judge the living and the dead, and with his whole reign of glory and honor forever and ever, Amen.

Oh! what a wonder of wonders is this! The nite God contrives the restoration and everlasting pine of revolted rebellious worms, who can render him no recompence, and who had deserved his infinite indignation! But it pleases him to love them, and to take pleasure in making them happy, who had made themselves miserable by their own guilt.

Let us, therefore, who feel his love, comfort ourselves and one another with this thought, that our heavenly Father ever was, and ever will be delighted with the conversion and salvation of believing sinners. And that this delight of his, is infinite, eternal, and mutable; for it is the delight of Deity. The conversion of souls then, must be a very important thing indeed; for if God takes delight in it, this at once implies an importance on it, that all language would be unable to describe; and shews us, that he values a soul more than all the material creation: and indeed, this is very evident, both by the words and works of our blessed Saviour; for he tells us, *God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.\** And our blessed Jesus gave his life for his Sheep, and that of his own free choice,† for he chose to redeem us by his own most precious blood, and for this end, voluntarily laid down his life for them, and took it again. He tells us, no man could take it from him, but he laid it down of himself, *i. e.* he suffered his persecutors to do it, for the above purpose; even to forsake his church and save his people: and to shew us, that the whole material creation is not half so valuable to him as the salvation of his people; for he prizes our souls above his human life. All this proclaims to us, that he sets a high value, yea, an *infinite value* on his people; and that, therefore, he is infinitely affected with their happiness. This is signified to us by the laying of the ~~strayed~~ Sheep on the shoulders of the rescuer, when found; and by that saying, that there was joy in heaven over one sinner that repents.

But

\* John, iii. 16.

† John, x. 17, 18.

But this amazing kindness of our Lord has stamped a dignity on his people, which surmounts our conceptions, and surpasses our powers to describe. To shew us a little of it, we are told, *they are his workmanship*;† consequently, they are, what David says they are, *the excellent of the earth*.\* And therefore, their Lord delights in them, having made them comely by his own comeliness which he has put upon them. He draws his own image on them, in their regeneration, and then looks on them with approbation and divine delight; and makes them happy in the enjoyment of his manifested love.

2. From hence, it is fairly inferable, that the work of the Christian ministry is a *great work*, a *good work*, and the *work of God*. For it is appointed to be a *means* of winning souls to him; and it must be an *important* work, which is to effect such great purposes. Truly then, does the scripture say, *he that winneth souls is wise*. But if the preaching of the Gospel be so important, it cannot, I think, be the spot of God's children, to live in the neglect of it, much less to despise it. For God never appointed that which is useless in his church; but it is clear as the light, that he has appointed the preaching of his word in his church; therefore, those who wilfully neglect or despise it when they might enjoy it, pour contempt on divine wisdom and goodness. Let the guilty consider this matter most seriously, and let them lay to heart the many neglects of this kind, of which they are justly chargeable, and humble themselves before God on account of these their sad defects. For let them assure themselves, they will be called to the bar of God, to give an account for this another day. 'Tis the wisest way, therefore, to repent of, and forsake such neglects now, and to prize and observe what God has appointed to make us wise and happy. But in the next place,

3. It is plain, that christian ministers are Christ's under Shepherds, & sent forth by him to be instrumental

† Eph. ii. 10.

\* Psalm, xvi. iii.

§ II. Cor. viii. 23.—Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.—Mark, xvi. 20.

his hand, to bring his scattered Sheep to his fold, and also to feed them in the green pastures of his ordinances, and with the doctrines of the glorious Gospel. Not with the husks which swine eat, but with the manna which came down from heaven. And it is a certain matter of fact, that a genuine Gospel ministry is an ineffable blessing. I will not say, that God cannot save his people without it, but I feel assured that it is far from being his general mode of doing it, a solitary instance or two may have been met with, in which a very few have been awakened by the preached word : but when this has been the case, they have been then taught to prize the word, to attend the preaching of it, and have been fed and nourished by it, to life everlasting. To have a successful and savory ministry among any people, is to the honor of an embassy from the King of Heaven, and it is an happy omen, that he intends to send many sinners to ask his pardon, and to bestow it on them, in such a society. But,

If Deity itself delight in the conversion of souls ; if there is joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, ought we to rejoice at the conversion of our fellow-creatures ; and with what readiness and pleasure should we do every thing in our power to encourage and comfort them ? The Adversary is vigilant enough to discourage and distress them, and throw every stumbling-block in their way, which he possibly can ; and yet we should be as vigilant to counteract his devices ; as much as in us lies, to hold up their hands, and aid the hands of all those who are making laudable efforts to bring souls unto God. And to comfort and engage those who have set out on their way to Heaven : and as we may have opportunity and ability, to provoke them to love and to good works. And let us remember, that no work of faith or labour, unless we are enabled to engage in, shall ever be entirely in vain ; some good shall certainly arise from it, either to ourselves or others, or both. May the thought have its due weight with us, and stir us up to all proper activity : But in the next place,

5 If



5. If Jehovah sets such a value on souls, how should we long and pray for their conversion? And not only for the conversion of our friends and neighbours; but also, that this blessed work may diffuse itself all over the earth, and that the gospel may spread from pole to pole, with the rapidity of lightning, and be as awakening in its effects, as the loudest peals of thunder. And let us never forget (as is the manner of some), that the grand means of converting souls, is the *preaching of the gospel*.\* Our Lord has graciously appointed it for this end and purpose; therefore, it becomes us to bethink ourselves what we may do to promote the preaching of it, and to act accordingly. Let the men of property do what they can to procure gospel preaching, for those places where there is none. Let them encourage persons who are blest with piety and talents, to engage in this important work. And those happy men who are thus qualified by our divine master, engage in evangelizing with all their hearts, knowing that the talents which are given them, were imparted for the good of others as well as themselves. And let those happy men who are truly pious, but not gifted for public work, nor favored with worldly property, encourage those who are, both with their presence and their prayers. Example has a mighty effect, and how far this may succeed we cannot tell, till we have fairly tried it. But in the next place,

6. If the Lord sets such a value on the souls of men, ought we not to set a higher value on our own souls than we have done?† And to mind heavenly things more than we do? This, I think, must be evident to all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity. Are there not too many of us who are more concerned about worldly good, than there are about the salvation of their souls? This, I think, is justly to be feared. nay, it is very evident that it is so. But what egregious folly is this? It may in some measure be depicted by the conduct of the Idiot who prefers *pebbles and rashes* to a vast treasure

\* Mark, xvi. 15 to 17.—Acts, ii. 37.—Rom. x. 15.

† Matt. xvi. 26.

treasure of *gold*. This is enough (one would think) to make us ashamed of such stupid conduct; may we learn to be wiser, lest we *stick* our *dying pillows* with *thorns*; and wish when *too late*, that we had preferred that *most*, which would support us *best*, when flesh and heart faileth us. But moreover,

7. If God rejoices in the conversion of sinners, what substantial ground of rejoicing have they who are truly converted. Surely none on earth have such solid reason to rejoice as they have; well, therefore, may the Apostle say to believers, *rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.\** Oh! my believing brethren, you have occasion to sing for joy, for the Lord of all loves you, with an infinite and an everlasting love,† and reigns over you to do you good. He has given you his grace, and will give you glory‡ also, for the former secures the latter; and in your way thither, he will give you every good thing. And he has engaged to make all things work together for your good§ while here, and to bring you to everlasting bliss in heaven. Therefore, it becomes you to be joyful, yea, to sing for joy of heart, and to praise our gracious Lord with joyful lips. Let the vain world be convinced by your cheerfulness, that religion is not a gloomy and melancholy thing, as they have falsely supposed, but that it is, in truth and reality, the most pleasant and joyous thing in the world. And that the most pure and refined pleasures result from it. It makes us happy in life, under all its trials and pressures, and more than that, it makes us triumphant in death, and then introduces our souls into the blissful regions of eternal glory. Surely then, the christian is the happy, the holy, and the most courageous person. A holy fortitude is given him under all circumstances, and a real dignity is put upon him in all conditions. May the Lord give us all to share more and more abundantly of this religion in our hearts and lives.

But I have a word or two more to say to careless unconverted

\* Phil. iv. 4.    † Jer. xxxi. 3.    ‡ Psalm, lxxxiv. 11.  
§ Rom. viii. 28.

unconverted sinners. You who know nothing of the pleasures of religion, but are seeking your gratification in the forbidden paths of sin; let me ask you, as in the presence of God, did you ever find that pleasure you are seeking after in the ways of sin, on which your hearts are set? Your own consciences say, *no*, we never did. This is the answer which conscience gives, and surely it is a true one, as to the past, and it will be equally so in future. For as you never did find pleasure in your vicious ways, so you never will. It is not possible that you should, for the curse of the great God rests on all the wicked, and on all their wicked ways, and this will ever mar your carnal pleasures: and if ye never repent and turn to God, ye must lie down in eternal pain. But let us exhort you in the words of the Prophet, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.\** Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow. Returning sinners need not fear a refusal, for the Lord declares he will accept them graciously, and pardon them freely. Jesus casts out none who come to him, *no, not on any account*, either for present or past sins; they are no objection, for he freely forgives *all* sins that any returning sinner is chargeable with. They are the perverse, obstinate, and unbelieving, who resolve to persist in their crimes, who have every thing to fear. But the vilest of the vile† may obtain pardon and eternal life, by coming to Christ; for he never rejects any who come to him, nor will he ever do so. Come, therefore, to the Saviour, and his gracious arms will embrace you, and his everlasting love will enrich you, and make you happy for time and eternity. May the Lord, in the infinity of his mercy, make us all thus wise to salvation, and happy for ever in the Saviour's love. *Amen.*

## HYMN

\* Isaiah, iv. 7      † Mark, iii. 28, & ii. 17.—I. Tim. i. 15.

**HYMN AFTER SERMON.**

- 1 JESUS, thou Almighty Saviour,  
Call thy wand'ring fin-sick Sheep,  
From their roving base behaviour,  
And their souls in safety keep  
From each evil  
Which besets their every step.
- 2 Call the straying from the mazes  
Of their dark benighted way ;  
E'er the world and Satan seizes  
On them, as an easy prey.  
Mighty Shepherd !  
Make thy wand'ring Sheep obey.
- 3 Souls yet dead in sin, now quicken,  
By thy all-enliv'ning word ;  
With remorse may they be stricken,  
And now call upon the Lord.  
Make them hearken  
To thy gracious gospel word.
- 4 Now may heav'n have cause for shouting,  
And thy church partake the joy,  
To see Jesus, Satan routing,  
And his empire now destroy.  
Now may finners,  
O'er the earth, thy call obey.
- 5 Now may ministers and people,  
Feel thy vivifying power ;  
Rise and tread down ev'ry evil ;  
And begin from this glad hour,  
To shine Godlike !  
Till their souls all sin o'erpower.
- 6 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Shine on ev'ry doubting heart.

Let them see, through Jesu's merit,  
 Thou dost to their souls impart  
 Life eternal,  
 And that thou their father art.

### THE CONCLUDING PRAYER.

**O** THOU Father of spirits and God of salvation, we thank thee for this delightful opportunity, which thou hast afforded us ; and would now most earnestly beg thy divine blessing may rest on thy word which has been delivered, and on the souls of all who have heard it. May thine own children be refreshed and nourished by thy truth, as by the most delicious wine, and fed as by the bread of heaven. Cause them hereby to grow in every grace, till they are crowned with glory. Command an entrance for thy word into the hearts of sinners, let it penetrate their spirits, and lead them to the Saviour. May not thy word be a savor of death unto death to any of us, but, if agreeable to thy most holy will, of life unto life to us all. Pardon whatever thy pure eyes have seen amiss in either of us, and let us now depart with thy chearing blessing ; and at last bring us to thy courts above, to praise and enjoy thee for ever. Be with us when we meet again in thy name ; and let us this day be crowned with thy peculiar favor. We beg every mercy, in thy great Redeemer's Name.  
*Amen.*

And now may the saving Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the peculiar and special Love of the divine Father, and the comforting communion of the Holy Ghost, be with each of us, and all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, now and for ever. *Amen*

*( Thus ends the morning service. )*

After a small pause *Evangelista* descends, and the people begin to disperse, and return to their homes. But the pious persons who remarked the solemn and steady attendance of *Civicius* began to gather around him, and looked at him with smiling countenances,  
 mixed

mixed with seriousness; and one of them, venerable for piety and considerable standing in the ways of God, thus addressed our young friend.

*My dear young Friend,*

I have noticed you with a great deal of pleasure and sacred delight, this morning, during the whole of divine worship; and am inclined to think, that you are one of the dear followers of the despised Nazarene; I trust my hope is not ill founded.

*Civicus.* Dear Sir, I am greatly obliged by your kindness, and freely tell you, if I am one, it is so very lately, that I fear to say positively I am, but I can say, it is my most earnest desire to be; and I think I can say, I have this morning had such a solemn pleasure, and at some moments, such deep conviction of my native depravity and actual guilt, as I never had before; nor am I without an humble hope, and some drops of consolation; for though I never heard to such advantage till now, yet I have enjoyed the most beneficial conversation of my good friend, Evangelista, before, and it was that which drew me here this Morning.

*Goodman.* My dear Sir, I am sincerely glad of it. and am disposed to rejoice on your account, and I trust the Lord will draw your heart effectually to himself, make you happy in his love, and preserve you to the end. Take courage, be not afraid, fear nothing but sinning, and the Lord will be with you.\*

*Civicus.* My dear Friend, I thank you for your kind advice, and trust that the Lord will be with me; he knows I want him as much as any poor soul ever did in the world. May he be with you and me also, and each of us till he may see good to take us to glory. They all pronounced a cheerful *Amen!* And then cordially shook hands and parted.

Now *Evangelista* comes by, and takes *Civicus* by the hand, and says, now my *Civicus* knows who the minister is.

\* Is not Goodman's example worthy of imitation?

*Civicus* Yes, my *Evangelista*, I now understand your character and calling better than I did before, But oh ! how am I astonished !

*Evangelista*. At what is your wonder excited, my *Civicus*?

*Civicus*. At the solemnity, simplicity, and heavenly grandeur of your animating worship. I hardly know which to wonder at most, my own stupidity and folly, or the glory and grandeur of the house and worship of God. Had I known any thing of its charming excellence before, I would not have neglected it till now. What a beast was I, not to have frequented the House of God till now ? But oh ! how do I bless the kind hand of providence that led me into your company, and thereby into the House of God. During the singing of the first Hymn, I was struck with solemnity and filled with delight ; and could not help exclaiming to myself, *surely this, this is the gate of heaven !* I never joined in such worship before. In reading, I was much entertained ; nor did I ever see such beauty in the holy scriptures till now, they shone on my mind with new light, and in them I beheld an unspeakable glory. Alas ! how blind have I been to the glories of this heaven-descended book.† Oh ! that I had been acquainted with the house and worship of God before. The sermon has made such an impression on my mind as no other sermon ever did. The prayers before and after, were quite new to me, I never heard the like, nor ever felt my heart join in any so cordially and fervently, till this morning. Indeed, every part of your worship was so new to me, and I thought, so divine ; that I can find no words capable of expressing my ideas fully, or setting forth the pleasures I have felt in it. Nor, on the other hand, can words describe the convictions and self-reproof I have had for neglecting so long this terrestrial dwelling of the Most High. The worship and the people seemed to me to be all of a heavenly and spiritual kind. But I am now happy to know I have found the House of God at last.

*Evan.*

† II. Peter, i. 21.

2. I am very happy, dear Civicus, to find  
 astonishment so laudably, and so properly excited.  
 It is certainly very right to behold with holy astonish-  
 ment the kindness and mercy of our God in appoint-  
 ing christian sabbath and worship, and with  
 all hearts to adore our merciful Lord for it. And  
 we should ever either neglect or despise the one  
 or the other, is the most astonishing ingratitude that  
 can be. But, my Civicus, be assured that your feel-  
 ings are realized by all those who are brought into  
 a world of divine grace. They all see, as you  
 do, the marvellous kindness and love of God in sending  
 his Son, in the appointment of his house and wor-  
 ship. And they all deplore their own lamentable  
 ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry, as well as their  
 neglect of the word and worship of God. There-  
 fore Civicus, your case is not singular, but quite  
 common as theirs. At the same time, you have  
 more abundant reason to be thankful to the Lord  
 who has thus favored you.

3. I am happy, my dear Evangelista, to be-  
 lieve as I now do, how I have been led by divine  
 providence into the way in which it appears to me  
 to be designed to do me good. I was unconsciously  
 in your company, at a time when I thought I  
 was as good as any of my neighbours, and that, conse-  
 quently, all was well, and I had nothing to fear; nor  
 did I know, either that I wanted, or that I should meet  
 such a kind instructor; nor had I any such a

And as for the house of God, though I cer-  
 tainly had heard of the existence of such a place, yet  
 had no acquaintance with it, nor any desire after it.  
 I thought my parish church was quite right, and that  
 those who separated from her, were weak and con-  
 siderable, if not wicked people. Oh the stupidity of the  
 heart! But, blessed be the Lord! I now know  
 that the healing waters flow, and see where the true  
 shines, and have felt their genial influences on  
 my mind; and glory for ever to the Lord, this  
 has slain my hateful prejudice, and shewn me my  
 error. Yea, it has powerfully disposed me to



love and delight in that which I had hitherto hated. For though, for good manners sake, I was habitually civil and obliging to all my neighbours, yet I had no love for that which I now see to be superlatively lovely. I mean the precious gospel itself, and the gospel worship. I suppose, my Evangelists, that the mode you have adopted this morning, is your general plan.

*Evan.* Certainly, my Civicus; thought at times we use such variety as circumstances may require, yet (as you say) this is our general plan: and we have adopted it on the clearest conviction of its superior utility and spirituality, and its agreeableness to the true nature of divine and acceptable worship, and the gracious feelings of the mind of man; or, which is better still, that it is strictly scriptural.

*Civicus.* I am sincerely glad of it, for never in my life did I feel such solemn pleasure, or such sacred delight as I have felt this morning. The Hymns were so expressive of my feelings, and the Prayers so congenial with my desires, that I thought heaven was come down to earth, and the songs of the blessed sung below. As for the Sermon, it was the first I ever heard that did me any real good. Its divine truths and doctrines I had known nothing of till I conversed with you. But such light did I now see, and such energy have I felt, as till now I was a total stranger to. Your doctrine, I am sure, is the doctrine of the scriptures, and therefore, divinity is stamped on it, and as such my heart most cordially embraces it. My soul is expanded and captivated by its influence; and from this happy day, I shall attend (by divine aid) at the House of God, as often as its doors are open for the worship of the Lord. I now design constantly to attend the Lord's earthly courts. *Blessed be God!* I now see where the heavenly manna falls, and through grace, am resolved I will go and gather it up. Let the swine go and gather up the husks which the *moral tale* *Lecturers* give to their poor deluded disciples; but I will now feed on the heavenly manna of *evangelic* *truth*.  
*Evan.*

*Evan.* I am exceedingly pleased, my dear *Civica*, with these lively feelings which you have expressed, and trust you have found the truth of *David's* observation, that *the entrance of the Lord's word giveth light.\** It is clear you were dark enough before, but now you have felt the entrance of God's word, you are made to see. This is an inconceivable blessing; and this is evident, for it has slain your prejudice; and to be blest with a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and to have faith to believe it, is great indeed. To be enabled to trample on our native prepossessions, is an astonishing mercy; and I take it to be an happy evidence, that you are as the Apostle says the believing *Thessalonians* were, *chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.†*

*Civica.* Indeed, my *Evangelista*, I hope this is really true, for I am convinced, that nothing but a power divinely strong, could either slay my prejudice, or renew my heart; but, thanks to sovereign grace, I hope I can say, I feel both. Yea, through grace, I feel it is done. I can now rejoice in the truth, for I find it has made me free, both from my native prejudice, and the reigning power of unbelief, it has made me prize the Saviour, and put my trust in him, and taught me to love his word and his worship. I therefore bless his name, and rejoice in him.

*Evan.* I rejoice with you, and praise the Lord on your account; and observing, as I now do, that the scriptures are your creed, I hope you will receive nothing on trust, as an article of faith, or matter of practice, either on my word, or the word of any man; but follow the noble example of the ancient *Bereans,‡* who searched the scriptures of the old testament daily, to see if even Apostles spake agreeable to them. This they did, and the consequence was, they received the word with all readiness of mind, for they found thereby, that the new testament doctrine agreed with the old, and that the former fulfilled the latter, and this inspired them with readiness of mind to receive apostolic

\* Psalm cxix. 130.

† 11. Thes. ii. 13.

‡ Acts xxi. 20.

tolic preaching, and by this they were made wise to salvation. Mark their example, my Civicus, and go and do likewise; and remember, that no human authority can make sacred any thing whatever, which has not been made so by Christ's own appointment. It is the will of the Almighty alone, which renders any observance a religious duty, or any doctrine an article of the christian faith; other authority is of *no account* in matters of religion.

*Civicus.* Dear Evangelista, I am fully convinced of the propriety and justice of what you assert; and by divine aid am determined to abide by these sentiments, and to act accordingly; for I am persuaded that the Bible is a divine Revelation, and therefore, every doctrine and every rite of a religious nature, must be agreeable to this divine rule, or else they are of no authority with any good man, and it is this conviction which has inclined me so cordially to embrace it; and the faith and order which your church receives and acts by.

*Evan.* Your observation is pleasing, my Civicus. But I pray that it may be proved by your future conduct, that your attachment to our doctrine and worship is the effect of sound conversion to God; and if so, it will abide with you: and then, while you adopt the faith and order which we judge scriptural, you will not be formal in the judicious use of a proper form. Let us never forget that the *power* of godliness is the *principal* thing; and that *without it*, a form,\* however scriptural, is but as a *dead carcass* without a soul. But when the power of godliness is felt, *that* will lead us to adopt the most edifying manner of addressing the Lord, both in private and public; and we shall not content ourselves with the externals of religion; but in the observation of the outward regulations which we account agreeable to God's Word, and the best feelings of a gracious soul, we shall find the Kingdom of God is within us, in *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy* in the Holy Ghost.† Now if you become such a  
*dissenter*

\* II. Tim. iii. 5.

† I. Cor. iv. 20—Rom. xiv. 17.

*dissenter* as this, then I shall say, you are a *Christian* indeed. For it is pure christianity which we contend for, and not mere formality.

But what God has joined together, we intend not to separate; the most edifying form, is the most scriptural: for that, and *above all*, for the *vital power* of christianity we contend, and by it we hope ever to abide. May you, my Friend, go and do likewise.

*Civicus*. I am thankful, dear Evangelista, for all your kind advice, for I feel it to be as interesting as it is kind, and heartily join with what you advance, and I hope to prove *this*, in my future conduct from hence forward; or rather, I trust divine grace will prove it in me and by me.

*Evan*. My Brother, may the Lord bless thee more and more, and make these thy happy feelings, as lasting as thy life, and as increasing as thy moments; and then, the end of thy faith will be the eternal salvation of thy soul. Which may the Lord grant, for Christ's sake. *Amen*.

Duty calls us now to part, to take a little refreshment, and to prepare for the evening worship.

*Civicus*. Agreed readily.—May we have a happy meeting this afternoon, and a refreshing shower of divine influence in the worship of God this evening.

*Evan*. Amen, and amen! Dear Civicus adieu.

*Civicus*. Dear Evangelista, adieu; may grace and peace be with us.

### REFLECTION, by EVANGELISTA.

How good is it to be enabled to support and carry on an edifying conversation. Were christians more in the habit of conversing in a judicious and spiritual manner, how much more good may be done by them than ever yet has been. But those who would converse spiritually, must have much influence from the divine Spirit; and then their thoughts and words will be at liberty to engage in a profitable manner in  
christian

christian conversation : and then to, if called by providence to join the company of those in our way who may be strangers to true godliness, we shall know how to address them properly without offence ; at least in some instances. May all those who profess godliness, be blest with all that heavenly wisdom which shall make us meet for every good word and work on earth ; and prepare us for eternal glory in heaven. Let us aim at this, remembering, that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him. He commands us to ask, and promises us that we shall receive ; he bids us seek, and says we shall find ; let us make trial, and find it verified.

*Evangelista* and *Civicus* having parted, during the interval of divine worship ; *Civicus* began his Soliloquy in the following strains.

#### SOLILOQUY, by CIVICUS.

Oh my soul ! how thou hast now been directed into the courts of Jehovah's temporary residence ; surely it was the House of God, and thou didst feel it to be the frontier of the heavenly world. How great is the marvellous kindness of God to such a beaighted wretch : I, who neither knew God, nor had any desire to know him, or any regard for his house and worship, but held the same in contempt ; yet I have been sent for to come into the earthly mansion of the great King, the King of Sion !\* I have been fed and feasted there, on the royal dainties provided for the King's Children !† Wonderful grace ! Amazing love of the Lord of Sabaoth ! But I want a heart tuned high with the music of heaven, to chaunt his glorious praises. How wise and how kind is thy providence, O Lord ! I adore thee, I praise thee, I love thee ; oh that I could love thee more, and better do thy sacred pleasure ! What an entertainment this ! How divinely sweet were the sacred songs of praise ; surely they were copied from the songs of the redeemed in the heavenly world ;‡ and therefore, the music  
of

\* Psalm ii. 6.

† Prov. ix. 1, 2.

‡ Rev. xiv. 3.

of heaven descended to earth ; and this was that which made the singing so divinely pleasant. Oh how I love it ! And the prayers, surely I never heard the like before ; but how natural, how spiritual, how rational ; and it appears to me that this is the most just and proper mode of addressing the Almighty, because prompted and indited by our feelings, and that sense of want, as well as of gratitude, which the mind perceives. This appears to me to be best suited to the nature of divine worship, and the best feelings of the mind of man. For I know, if my mind feels want, this feeling will teach me to express that want in suitable language ; and I believe, that the acceptable prayer is the expression of mental feelings, and mental desires. I have observed, that even infants and young children can express their feelings, either in words, gestures, or cries, in a manner which their parents well understand : and can the heaven-born children of God be less capable of expressing their mental feelings and desires, than infants and children are their natural ones ? Surely not. Blessed be God for ever and ever, that my detested prejudice against free prayer is now slain, and that I have tasted its sweetness, and seen its propriety. Besides, the Lord wants not a well set form of words to understand our meaning, I now see he reads the naked breast, and knows perfectly every secret wish.\* I find the compassion of the Lord is such as tender parents feel : for he knows our frail frame, and understands all our sighs, and reads the meaning of every groan.† Well, *I want a Prayer-Book no longer*, for now I feel I have the *Spirit of prayer* imparted to me, and I find this is *far better than all the books in the world*.

But oh ! was there ever such a debtor to sovereign grace as I ? Glory to the Lord to everlasting ages ! The recollection of the sermon brings to my mind thine inexpressible kindness, my most merciful Saviour : thine is compassion indeed ! and thine be the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*  
My

\* Psalm cxxxix. 2.    † Rom. viii. 26, 27.—I. Cor. ii. 10.

My heart expands with pleasure, while I recollect those divine doctrines of the Saviour's compassion to his lost and straying Sheep : and now I know, what till lately I had no just conception of, what a Gospel Sermon is ; for the doctrines preached this morning at the house of God, are, I am sure, divinely true, for they are revealed in scripture ; and with this clear conviction, my heart embraces them, and my soul is captivated with their heavenly influence, and from this happy day, it is my intention to attend constantly at this earthly mansion of the King of Heaven. I feel my soul long for the courts of the Lord, and to thirst for those healing waters of heavenly life,\* which flow sweetly there. I think I shall never be able to live without constant draughts of this divine refreshment ; so that I may say, I have made the Lord's house my spiritual home ; and comparatively, I shall be happy no where else but there. Happy people who are there cherished and nourished by the doctrines of divine truth. Loving souls, I feel your kindness, and may the Lord smile on you ; and thou, my dear *Evangelista*, the Lord bless thee in thine own soul, and in thine honorable and glorious work. And oh, that this evening the Lord may be eminently with thee, and graciously present with us, to bless and cheer us, that we may have fresh matter of praise, and the name of our Jesus have a revenue of new adorations.

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The time of divine worship now draws nigh, to repair again to the House of God : and *Civicius* goes forth to attend divine worship, and at the House of God meets his friend *Evangelista*, and salutes him as in the following

### DIALOGUE.

\* Ezekiel, xlvii. 9.—Psalm xlv. 4.—Rev. xlii. 1.

## DIALOGUE IV.

*On the divine Being and Perfections, and the nature of acceptable worship.*

**CIVICUS.** Dear *Evangelista*, I am happy to meet you again at the House of God, and if I mistake not, I can say, I even now feel an enkindling of love and praise for divine mercies already received, as well as of ardent prayer that you may be assisted to preach the word of the Lord with all freedom and fervor, and that a divine blessing may attend the truth which you deliver to every heart, and to my own in particular.

*Evan.* My Brother, I am delighted to hear thee thus express thyself, and may the Lord accept thy praises and hear thy prayers, and grant us a penitential visit this evening, and make all to know, that God is here of a truth.—Both express their desires by a fervent *Amen*.

*(Worship begins.)*

*Evangelista* proceeds to begin divine worship as before; and having read a portion of the sacred word, sung the divine praises, and prayed with peculiar fervor and energy; then he proceeded to his sermon; in which he largely insisted on and proved, that all true gospel preaching lays the sinner low in the dust,\* and exalts the Saviour in the highest. That it strips him of *all* his fancied goodness, and supposed righteousness, and lays him prostrate at the Saviour's feet, as guilty and undone. That it sets forth the all-sufficiency of his atonement and righteousness and intercession; and that he saves to the uttermost, all who come to God by him.† That no pharisee,

\* Matt. ix. 13—xii. 11.

† Heb. vii. 25.



pharisee,† however reformed, moralized, and polished he may be, can be saved without Christ. That no returning sinner will ever be rejected by him, however great and manifold his crimes may have been. That those whom Christ pardons, he also sanctifies and saves them from sin, by the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit.

The service was then concluded in the usual manner : and the whole of it was lively, animating, and impressive ; and all present seemed sensible that the Divine Presence was there. The Sermon carried with it a power and evidence which was generally felt.

Service being concluded, *Evangelista* and *Civius* retired together, and when arrived at home they thus began to converse.

*Civius*. Dear *Evangelista*, you have been preaching on the great Redemption, it is certainly a most delightful subject, but for the present, if you please, let our contemplations turn on the Divine Being and perfections.

*Evan*. I consent,—and observe,

1. Deity is possessed of undervived existence, and independant Being ; without beginning, author, or cause ; for the holy word informs us, he *is* from everlasting to everlasting ;\* and that he is the former of *all things* ;† that he created all things by the word of his power ; he spoke all things into existence : consequently, he is the ever-living and self-existing *I AM*. The fountain of all life and the great progenitor of universal nature. God is of himself, without any conceivable derivation, dependance, or limitation whatever. Therefore, it is well said by *Paul*, he who comes to God must believe that he *is*.|| He does not say what he is ; for that can never be fully told ; but the natural and necessary inference to be drawn from it is, that he is infinite : in his nature, perfections, and attributes,

† Matt. v. 20—xxiii. 23.

\* Psalm xc. 2, 4.

† Gen. i. 1.—Psalm cii. 25.—Rev. iv. 11. || Heb. xi. 6.

attributes, great beyond all possible conception; and infinitely exalted above all blessing and praise. But,

2. Deity must needs be immutable. The sacred word says, *he is without variation or shadow of a change.*§ He is the *same* from eternity to eternity. What he now is, that he ever was, and his being, purposes, and perfections never alter. Immutability is an essential perfection of the divine nature; and the being of God is an *eternal now*. Reason will dictate this truth, that variableness is absolutely inconsistent with perfection: but God is infinitely perfect. Therefore, he is as the scripture teaches, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*\* But I observe,

3. Omnipotence† is essential to the Divine Being. The works of creation evince this; for he who made all things, and preserves universal nature must be the Lord Almighty. And the Being who does this, must be possessed of all conceivable power; yea, of inconceivable energy. But Jehovah commanded the heavens, the earth, and the seas into being, and gave life to all living things, both celestial and terrestrial.‡ Therefore, all possible power resides in him natively, as in its proper source. And he can create or destroy as he sees good, for he can effect whatever he pleases. Consequently, all powers of every shape and name, depend on divine power, nor can they exist but as God chuses. For the infinite capability of Jehovah reaches beyond the utmost stretch of thought, nor can *men* or *angels* either tell or conceive§ how great his omnipotence actually is, or say what wonders it *can*, or *cannot* perform; but this is evident, it can do whatever it wills, whether it be the creation of millions of worlds, or the annihilation of all beings but his own. Reason and scripture agree in this; that Jehovah is the Lord Almighty. But,

#### 4 Omniscience

§ James i. xviii.—Mal. iii. 6.—Job. xxiii. 13. \* Heb. xiii. 8.

† Rev. xi. 17. ‡ Col. i. 16. § Job xxxvi. 26.—xxvii. 28.

4. Omniscience|| is also an infinite perfection of the divine mind ; it is essential to Deity to be *infinite in knowledge*. God, who is the fountain of life, is also the source of light ; and all light, natural intellectual, and spiritual, resides in the Godhead, and flows from him. He is the *Father of Lights*.¶ He knoweth all things in the heavenly world, and gave the angelic host, and the spirits of the just every particle of knowledge which they possess. He knoweth every thing on earth, nor can any thing whatever be hid from him, whether it be great or small, good or evil. All that wisdom which the sons of men possess, he is the author and the giver of it ; nor has any man a single grain more than God gives him. He knoweth all things in the infernal regions,\* every diabolical scheme against the church of Christ, or any individual saint, is perfectly known to him ; hell is uncovered before him. Knowledge in God, as well as power, is *infinite and eternal* : and every thing which transpires through the narrow bounds of time, and whatever shall come to pass to eternity, is *ever present* to infinite knowledge : nor is any thing *past*, or *to come*, to Divine Omniscience. All things, from the greatest to the least, are *perfectly* known to God. And all things done, or that ever shall be done, whether good or evil, either by men or angels, remain the same before him. Nor is it possible that any thing should escape his notice ; but all things now in existence, and whatever shall exist in future, are understood by Jehovah with infinite precision. And when every thing that ever shall come to pass, has been actually compleated, it will add nothing to the infinite knowledge of the *great Jehovah*. For he knows all things *perfectly, infinitely, and everlastingly*. But I observe,

5. That Omnipresence,‡ is likewise a perfection of the Divine Essence. For that power which created all things must needs be every where present, as the preserver of

|| Psalm cxxxix. 7 to 12.

¶ James i. 17.

\* Job xxvi. 6.—Prov. xv. 11

‡ Psalm cxxxix. 8. to 11.

of all things. Infinite power must be omnipresent, for nothing can be where it is not. Consequently, no place or space, however capacious or contracted it may be, can either circumscribe or exclude him, he fills all worlds, and upholds universal nature. It is impossible to conceive of any place or space from which the infinite Creature is absent. He is, therefore, the *ever-present* and *omnipresent Jehovah*. In the heavenly world he is ever present to felicitate the celestial inhabitants by the manifestation of his unveiled glories, and filling the celestial regions with inconceivable splendor and refulgence. On earth, his power is present to protect, preserve, and supply the wants of every living thing. To his saints in *this world*, he manifests his gracious and merciful presence; and they are at all times conscious of his omnipresence and of his general providence, and at some seasons they are feelingly conscious of his special and gracious presence; and of his merciful interference in their favor. To them, divine omnipresence is a source of consolation, and a sacred stimulus to true virtue. In the infernal regions, divine vindictive Justice is present to punish the guilty with its terrors. Thus the existence of all things, prove to a demonstration, the omnipresence of God; for all things and all beings, were made, and are supported by his power, and nothing can exist in the absence of that power. Consequently, divine power is every where present. But I observe,

6. That infinite Goodness,\* is also a perfection of the Deity, natively and necessarily resident in him. He who made all things, and supplies all things with his munificence, must needs be infinitely good. But Jehovah supplies all rational beings, and all animal creation with being and support. The inhabitants of the heavenly world live on his bounty, in the most felicitating and abundant manner. They derive from him

§ I. Kings viii. 27.

|| Psalm cxlv. 15, 16, 18.

\* Psalm cxlv. 9—20.—cxlvi. 7 to 10.

him their being and their bliss, as well as their spotless purity ; their happiness is perfect in its kind, and eternal in its duration ; and great and glorious above our conceptions. All the inhabitants of the earth, are likewise living on his bounty, and supplied by his goodness, for *he makes his sun to shine on the evil, and on the good,† and he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust.* Yea, the eyes of all living look to him for supply, and he gives them their meat in due season. Behold, with wonder and delight, how divine goodness extends to, and is enjoyed by all animate nature. Through all the earth divine goodness shines, and all flesh enjoys its proportion of the same : and that proportion is suited to the natures and wants of all, in the best possible manner that infinite wisdom and rectitude conceives to be most proper. All men partake of his general goodness,‡ but the saints of God partake of his special grace. To them he gives grace and glory, and from them withholds *no good thing.*§ Divine goodness has replenished the earth with immense stores of good, both for man and beast, and from thence they derive suitable support and nourishment : and we may justly say of it, it is higher than the heavens, deeper than the lowest depths, more extensive than the widest space, and broader than the utmost bounds of creation. It is as infinite as the divine mind, and perfect as God himself, for 'tis boundless and inconceivable. Let us dismiss this idea by singing the following lines.

“ He makes his grass the hills adorn,  
And clothes the smiling fields with corn ;  
He pours his goodness from the skies,  
And sends all creatures rich supplies ;  
He gives us all things, and withholds  
No real good from upright souls.”

WATTS.

But in the next place,

7. Mercy is an essential perfection in the Deity :  
he

† Matt. v. 45.    ‡ I. Tim. iv. 10.    § Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

he tells us his name is *Merciful*;\* and also, that *his tender Mercies are over all his works*: that as tender parents pity their offspring, so he pities them that fear him. But mercy has respect to misery and wretchedness, and divine mercy has had respect to miserable man, and of its *own mere good pleasure*. God, in the person of his Son, has treasured up boundless mercy and infinite grace, for the miserable children of *Adam*. It was divine mercy that pitied us in our low estate, because it endures for ever;† and provided redemption for us. It was divine mercy that sent salvation to us; and it was divine mercy, that liberated us, my dear *Civics*, from the chains of our sinful slavery, and healed us of our spiritual maladies, and delivered us from the *curse* under which we had fallen; and it will make us meet for glory. Divine mercy finds us food, and clothes us with love, protects us from danger, supports us under our trials, and relieves our necessities, yea, and makes *all things* work for our good:§ and, to crown all, takes us at last to heaven, and makes us perfectly and eternally happy. But in the next place,

8. Perfect Justice dwells natively in the Deity. Yes, the Maker and Judge of all the earth does RIGHT.|| He is the just God, and all his works are done in righteousness. He pardons and saves all those who believe his gospel, and obey his commands; and punishes only for sin and unrighteousness which is never repented of. The perseveringly wicked *only*, he condemns; the believing and repenting sinner, he freely and fully justifies. He pleads the cause of his oppressed, and plagues the oppressors. As Lord of all, he has promulgated the best laws, and the obedience they require, is productive of the most perfect felicity. But the impious and finally impenitent transgressors of those pure laws, are not any one of them suffered to pass with impunity. Every part of the divine

\* Exod. xxxiv. 6. † Psalm ciii. 13. ‡ Pf. cvxxvi. 23.

§ Rom. viii. 28. || Gen. xviii. 25.—Pf. xcvi. 2.—xcviii. 9.

divine conduct is regulated by infinite justice, and though at times short-sighted mortals can see nothing but clouds and darkness round about him, yet Justice and Judgment are still the habitation of his throne. His rewards are just, and his corrections are right. His curse falls on the *incorrigible only*: and he pardons repenting transgressors in full consistency with the most perfect equity; for he punishes sin while he pardons the penitent. Therefore, we say, with the utmost strictness of truth, that *all* his works are done in righteousness. And at last, the righteous and the wicked will see and own, that the Lord is a God of infinite justice. The saints will see it and rejoice, and the wicked must own, they have but the due reward of their evil deeds, even when they fall beneath his frown. All shall then own, his nature is pure, his laws are right, and that he is good and just. But I observe in the next place,

9. That God is infinitely wise,\* It is essential to the Divine Being to be infinite in wisdom; yea, all wisdom dwells in him, and he is the great fountain from whence it flows; in him it originates, and from him it proceeds to all who are blest with any share of it. Therefore, he can rule, and over-rule all creatures and all events. He can permit evil without being the author of it: and he can over-rule the evil actions of his offending creatures, without conniving at their sin, and bring about the greatest good, when they commit the greatest evil. He can, and has substituted the innocent for the guilty,† to suffer for and redeem them; and that in the most perfect consistency with infinite justice; and by this means, he can and has punished an innocent victim, and thereby satisfied divine justice,‡ and redeemed and pardoned an innumerable multitude of sinners, of the blackest character.§ By his wisdom he has actually planned and effected this

\* I. Tim. i. 17.—Rom. xvi. 27.—I. Cor. i. 24. † II. liii. 10.

‡ Psalm xl. 6 to 8.—Heb. x. 5 to 10.—ix. 26.

§ I. Cor. vi. 9 to 11.

this, in the person of his Son : and through that redemption which Jesus has wrought, he has imparted renovation and eternal life to unnumbered millions. He can and does govern all worlds without difficulty, confusion, or perturbation, and with the most perfect quiescence. He can suffer confusion to arise without authorising it, to bring about the most beautiful order and harmony ; and by dire anarchy, he can remove worse evils, and effect the most beneficial reforms ;|| and by these means he can manifest his wisdom without being either *unkind* or *unwise* : and all this he has effected in divers times and places. He can suffer vice to arise to the highest, and thereby destroy the wicked, and deliver his people, and make an effectual way for the spread of his gospel, and the reign and triumph of true virtue, and the virtuous of mankind. This and much more abundantly, will divine wisdom gloriously effect in its own time and way, and in the most conspicuous manner ; and, to human reason, by very unlikely means. Sound reason will dictate, that this is true of Jehovah ; and the scripture says, he is the *all-wise* God. But I observe,

10. That absolute and uncontrolled Sovereignty,\* is an attribute of Deity, and this by native right. The great Author of all things must needs be the rightful owner,† and the Sovereign disposer of all things. All things and all powers are his own ; the universe is his kingdom, and all creatures must be subject to him. They who willingly submit, are happy in his favor ; but the obstinate and rebellious shall be conquered, either by justice or mercy. Indeed, his willing subjects on earth, are all of them *first* subdued by mercy ; and those who persist in their rebellion, fall under his vindictive hand. He has an infinite right to rule at pleasure, for he is the *only Potentate*‡ with whom power originates. Therefore, he is perfectly and absolutely right in doing whatever he pleases.

Creatures

|| II. Kings x. 18 to 29.

\* Dan. iv. 5, 17, 34, 35.

† Pf. l. 10, 11.

‡ I. Tim. vi. 15.



Creatures of every name, are the productions of his power, and rational creatures of every description, owe their being and capacities to his discriminating goodness. From his hand proceeds all life, and all good things; and, therefore, all things must be perfectly at his disposal; and it is infinitely right that they should. His dominion is, as it ought to be, both absolute, § universal, and eternal. This is the exclusive right and prerogative of the great Jehovah; and neither priest nor potentate can pretend to any such right, without arrogance and blasphemy. He only, who is infinitely wise and perfectly good, can be the absolute and universal Ruler; but these perfections are found in God alone: therefore, 'tis his exclusive right; and unbiassed reason will confirm this fact: the scripture says, *his Kingdom ruleth over ALL* :|| and he himself is, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*¶ But I would observe,

11. That spotless purity and holiness, reside naturally in God,\* and are essential to the divine nature. A God of infinite justice must needs be spotlessly pure, and he who does all things in absolute righteousness, must needs be holy: therefore, he says to all his children, *be ye holy for I am holy*. He who is a just God, and a Saviour, is also, at the same time, a sin pardoning, and a sin avenging God. For, though he pardons penitents, he punishes their crimes in the person of their Surety, and corrects them in a fatherly way, for their transgressions, though he saves them for ever. And the finally impenitent, are punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. Therefore, it is safe to conclude, in the language of the Lord himself. His ways are pure: he is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*† *There is none holy as the Lord, none so righteous as our God.* He is a God of infinite purity, and he looks upon sin with detestation and abhorrence. And though he saves his people, he saves them *from* ‡ their

§ Pf. lxxvi. 9, 10. & 1xv. 13.

|| Pf. xcix. 9.—Lev. xx. 7.

† 1. Sam. ii. 2.

¶ Rev. xix. 16.

\* Pf. cxlv. 17.

‡ Matt. i. 21.

in sins, not *in* them. They are made to know that is an evil and bitter thing; yea, more bitter than death, in any form whatever, and more loathsome in gall and wormwood, or the most deadly poison; sets them apart for himself, and holds them in his hand, and makes them to appear as lights in the world. He teaches them to imitate him in his holiness, and to hate and forsake iniquity, and the conduct and conversation of sinful men. All which shews him to be the *Holy One*; for nothing that is unholy or pure can dwell in his presence. Holiness to the world, is written on the hearts, and imprinted on the foreheads of all them who shall dwell in the courts of glory. Therefore, though he is a sin-pardoning, is also, a sin-avenging God. This is further evinced both by his law and his gospel. The *law* enjoins the most perfect holiness, both in heart and life; the *gospel* declares all who are made partakers of its benefits, to be holy internally and externally. Consequently, it is evident, that Jehovah is a God of *spotless purity*. As I would observe,

12. That perfect and inviolable Truth\* is natively and necessarily inherent in the Divine Being. For a Being so good, so holy, so righteous and just, can never *falsify*.† Truth dwells in him as in its proper fountain, and flows from him as from its native source, and shines with superlative beauty in all that he says. His doctrines are infallibly true, and the predictions he has caused to be recorded for our instruction, have many of them been verified by the events foretold, and those which remain to be fulfilled, are all infallibly certain in their accomplishment. His promises are everlasting verity; and he is, and ever will be, a God fulfilling his word.‡

“ His truth inviolably keeps

The largest promise of his lips.”

All his threatenings will be fully executed, on the truly impenitent. The truth of God is absolute and eternal,

§ Psalm iv. 3.

† Tit. i. 2.

\* Jer. x. 10.—Isaiah xl. 8.

‡ Luke xvi. 17.

eternal, it can never be falsified, altered, or changed; and this is a permanent source of consolation to every believer. His word is firmer than the pillars of heaven, or the foundations of the earth. Safe and happy are all they who put their trust in him. But I would observe again,

13. That incomprehensibility\* is an attribute of Deity, and justly attributed to him. The infinite God must needs be beyond the comprehension of finite beings, who are not able to comprehend themselves. Men cannot find out their own finite and limited natures to perfection, much less can they find out the nature of him who is infinite in all perfection. All that can be known of God by any of us, is from the manifestations he has seen good to make of himself in his word, and by his works. The latter shew his power and Godhead,† and convinces our reason that he is able to do whatever he chuses, and to perform wonders far above all that we can conceive or think. The former shews us what he *is*, and tells us, that he is eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, omnipotent, &c. But all our descriptions of him fall infinitely short of what he really is. Indeed all language must fail to describe *him* who is infinite. The most capacious of all the creatures he has made, are but finite and limited; but he is the infinite and incomprehensible God.‡ Therefore, all the praises that are paid him in heaven and earth, fall vastly short in describing his infinity. But his own works praise him, and his word tells us that of him, which could never otherwise have been known. In the scriptures, all that is necessary for us to know of him, is there taught us; both for our present welfare and eternal felicity; and from hence we must derive all accurate knowledge of God. But I would observe again,

14. The divine Essence is ONE,§ and no more, though there be (which idolaters have called) Gods many

\* Rom. xi. 33.—Psal. cxlv. 3.      † Rom. i. 25.—Job xxvi. 14.  
Job xxxvii. 23.      § Deut. vi. 4.—Isa. xlii. 8.—I. Cor. viii. 4.

, and Lords many, but to us, who know and  
 our Bibles, there is but **ONE GOD**. *ONE great  
 Cause of all things, One Almighty Creator and  
 ever, who hath all power and life in himself, and  
 reign is infinite, unbounded, and eternal. He is  
 fore, the Only Potentate; and there are no more  
 but He.* Reason itself can perceive that there  
 be but *one*, who is an infinite, universal, and  
 me Being; that there can be but *one*, who is over  
 God blessed for ever. Absolute supremacy is  
 ial to *one* God, and this, in the very nature of  
 s, excludes all co-partnership in divine supremacy.  
 we admit of another to be Jehovah, besides him  
 is so, neither of them could be Lord of all; for  
 would restrict the other, and neither of them  
 reign without control. But this is such an ab-  
 y, that I should think no one can admit for a  
 ent, who believes that there is a God. For it is  
 nt, there can be but *one* who has universal do-  
 on. But the Kingdom of God ruleth over all.  
 efore, God is *one*. Besides, there can be but *one*  
 is the Creator of all things, for if there are *two*  
 create, one of them must be a created creator;  
 his can never be; therefore, there is but *one*  
 or, and that *one* Creator is the eternal Jehovah;  
 we adopt the language of the psalmist and say,  
*Jah is God alone; over all for ever blest.* And  
 gh none can search him out to perfection, or  
 ver but some faint traces of his being and per-  
 sons, yet he can manifest himself to as many as he  
 es, and in what measure he pleases; in the Bible  
 as manifested himself in a manner vastly superior  
 y thing that could ever otherwise have been con-  
 d of him; and surely, what he is pleased to say  
 imself, must needs be most strictly and perfectly

Nor can any thing be so rational as to admit,  
 the divine goodness is such, that it will impart to  
 s rational offspring, that knowledge of the divine  
 which it is necessary for the honor and happiness  
 deemed man to know, and to be submissive to:  
 it is equally rational to admit, that if God makes

any revelation of himself to man, that he thereby discovers to him something grand and important of himself that can never be known any other way ; and by looking into my Bible, and searching candidly and seriously, I find this is *strictly* and *absolutely\** true. Therefore I say,

15. That Deity has made known himself in the pages of revealed truth,† in a manner that is vastly superior to every other that has been or can be made of him, by any man or men that ever existed. There we find he describes himself to us in such a transcendent and glorious manner, as human intellect could never have guessed at, if left alone to conceive of God. Reason then, must bow to revelation, and own the divine testimony, though it soars above the utmost stretch of its powers ; for here the Deity speaks, and sound reason will submit. On this ground we assert, that we believe the Divine Nature is social, though alone ; and for this reason, we are told, that *there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit*, and that *these Three are One.*‡ There is, therefore, *One God*, and but one ; but this almighty inconceivable Jehovah is a triune God in unity : and this Trinity is taught us by Jesus Christ, in his institution of christian baptism, which is to be administered in the name of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. At the baptism of Christ, we find the *Father* speaks himself, and calls Christ his *beloved Son*, and the *Holy Spirit* descends on him in an assumed visible shape. The apostolic benediction, is in these words : The grace of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the love of *God*, and the communion of the *Holy Ghost*, be with you all. In the beginning of the existence of this world, the Spirit of God is said to move, &c. and God speaks of himself in the plural number, *let US make man*, § and St. John says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with*

• Pf. xix. 7 to 10.—II. Tim. iii. 15, 16. † II. Pet. i. 16 to 21.

‡ I. John v. 7, 8.—Matt. iii. 16, 17.—xxviii. 19, 20.

John i. 1, 2.—II. Cor. 13, 14.—Isaiah vi. 3.—Rev. iv. 8.

§ Gen. i. 2, 26.—Heb. i. 6.

*with God, and the Word was God.* It appears that the prophets in the old testament, and the apostles in the new, worship the triune God, in these words; *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.* And that divine worship is paid to the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, both in the old testament and the new, is clear, and beyond the power of a rational contradiction. Therefore, to worship the *Father* (through Christ) is to worship God; and to worship *Jesus Christ*, is to worship God in the person of Christ; and to worship the *Holy Spirit*, is likewise to worship God. But let us never forget, that there is *one God*, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;\* and that, consequently, all acceptable worship to the *Father*, is directed to him through the *Son*, under the influence of the *Holy Spirit*. And let us never try to reason away what God has been pleased to say of himself; and though this is above the power of reason to conceive of, farther than revealed in scripture; yet, faith prevails here, and we worship a triune God in unity.†

Now, my *Civics*, you have heard my lecture, and that I may discover whether you have made any improvement, be so good as to favor me with your inferences from what I have advanced.

*Civics.* O my *Evangelists*, are you going to set me to make inferences? I fear I shall be but very inapt to such an employment: but however, if I *must*, I consent to do as well as I can. But before I proceed, I would just observe, it appears to me, that the children of God are called to exercise faith in the divine testimony, and not to frame systems of divinity by philosophical reasoning. I despise not reason, but it is, in my opinion, the most reasonable of all things to believe, that God cannot deceive, nor shew himself in false disguise; and, that what he says of himself sets every other testimony eternally aside, except it be in exact agreement with his own words. Therefore, I infer,

1. If

\* I. Tim. ii. 5, † I. Cor. i. 3.—Phil. i. 2.—ii. 1.

1. If God be eternal, there is nothing past nor to come with him,|| for every thing is infinitely known to him; nor can any thing be either forgotten or unforeseen by him:† but all things as they have been, as they now are, or ever shall be, remain before him *perfectly the same*. For, with him there is no variable-ness, nor shadow of a change.\* But,

2. If Deity be all-knowing, all-powerful, and every where present, then all creatures depend on him for *being*, for *well-being*, and *preservation*; and all this depends entirely on his good pleasure.† At his command they rose into existence, and at his frown they perish; and then, it must be clear to every discerning mind, that all things, and every creature in the heavens and on the earth, depend absolutely on the Divine good pleasure, for being, preservation, and every good thing. Without this, nothing can exist; for without his aid, all creatures must sink, and fall, and die. Therefore, all existence depends on the will, the power, and goodness of the great Jehovah. But in the next place,

3. If God be immutable, then whatever he does, is what he had before designed to do;‡ for a new resolution is a change of purpose, and a change of purpose is inconsistent with infinite wisdom: but God is infinitely wise. Consequently, he is in *one mind*,§ and none can turn him, and what his soul desireth even that he doeth. For the purpose of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations: and he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. And on this ground and foundation rests the certain salvation of all the throng redeemed by blood divine. But in the next place,

4. If God does all things after the counsel of his own will, then nothing happens by chance, but all things and all events come to pass most wisely; and in the

|| Psalm xxxiii. 11.    † Acts xv. 18.

\* Jam. i. 17.

† Psalm cxlv. 1, 2, 3. & cxlvi 9.

‡ Eph. i. 11.

Dan. iv. 35.—Eccle. iii. 11, 13.

§ Job xxiii. 13.

the best manner : none can better the divine plan any more than they can alter it. Then it is clear, that all things are ordered by infinite wisdom, in the most proper, as well as the most regular and orderly manner : and no doubt but the beauty, order, and propriety of every single step of the divine conduct, will excite the admiration, the praise, and gratitude\* of all the saints in the heavenly world, to eternal ages. But in the next place,

5. If the Deity be infinitely true and just, then the saints have the most firm and solid ground for consolation.† For God has made to them, exceeding many great and precious promises ; and they may assure themselves, they will all be performed, both to their joy and salvation, and the glory of the divine name : for he who is perfectly true, is also infinitely faithful, and he will perform every good word of promise to them to the uttermost, and make them happy in time and to eternity. But in the next place,

6. If Deity be infinitely just, he will punish all the finally impenitent‡ to the utmost of their demerits, and that must be, *St. Paul* tells us, with everlasting destruction and banishment from his blissful presence into eternal fire, *where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.*§ For it will be found true by all the finally impenitent and unbelieving ; *That the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.*|| For a Being who is infinitely good must needs hate evil, and punish it ; or else he must cease to be good. A righteous governor on earth, must not only reward the good, but punish the evil ; or otherwise he is clothed with power in vain. But God is just, and all his works are done in righteousness ; therefore, the wicked must turn or perish. But,

7. If God be the universal Governor, he will in due time

\* Psalm cxlv. 1, 2, 3.    † II. Peter i. 4.    ‡ Pf. cxlvi. 9.  
Matt. xxv. 46.    § Isaiah lxvi. 24.—Mark ix. 44, 46.  
|| Psalm ix. 17.



time bring in that glorious reign of righteousness and peace, which the scripture tells us<sup>†</sup> shall adorn the latter days. And no doubt but every step of the divine conduct, is a gradation in the divine procedure tending towards it; and every such gradation taken is a bringing forward its happy approach; and so sure as there is any one step taken, so sure will all the rest, and the glorious time arrive in all its fulness; and the long wished for day bless the the admiring eyes of those who have waited and prayed for it. But in the next place,

8. God being a most pure Spirit, knowing all things, and being every where present: they who would pay him acceptable worship, must be spiritual worshippers,\* who worship him in a spiritual manner, through the Mediator. None besides are like to find acceptance with him. Consequently, those who are dead in sin,† are not acceptable worshippers, but sinners before him, even in their best performances: but souls made spiritually alive to God, are blest with saving faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, these offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to the Father, by him; and none besides can. I look upon this to be a matter of such importance, and myself such a novice, that I feel incapable of conceiving of it as I could wish, nor do I understand it as I desire; I must therefore request my *Evangelista* to give his thoughts on this interesting subject.

*Evan.* Your ideas, are pertinent and just, and your mind is laudably inquisitive to know more; I am very glad of this, and I shall with the greater freedom and readiness proceed now to give you a few ideas on the nature of spiritual and acceptable worship. And I observe,

1. Your have anticipated (in a great measure) what I had thought proper to mention here. That all acceptable worship is a spiritual sacrifice‡ which can be

† Dan. vii. 14, 27.—Isaiah ii. 2. & xi. 9.

‡ Rom. xiv. 23.

‡ I. Peter ii. 5.

\* John iv. 23, 24.

be performed by spiritual persons only. Nothing can be more certain ; 'tis the doctrine which our Lord taught the woman of Samaria, and us also, by the same divine word. Therefore, this is a settled point. Persons dead in sin, rest in the form of worship, but souls divinely renewed and made spiritually alive cannot be satisfied with formality, they *must* have nearness to God, and communion with him, or they cannot be satisfied. But I observe in the next place,

2. That to be spiritual in the worship of God, it is necessary to have the understanding enlightened by divine truth ; † for without this 'tis impossible to have any acquaintance with the thing itself, and equally impossible to engage in the glorious work. An unconverted man has no other idea of worship than outward gestures, and uttering words ; his soul is dead to God, having no right knowledge of him, either in his person or worship ; therefore, his lifeless soul rests in dead formality, without any desire of any thing farther than that ; vainly supposing, that when the religious formula which his sect has adopted, is performed on a Lord's day, his duty is done, and all is well. Not so the christian—and, blessed be God, not so my *Civics* ; his mind is in some good degree enlightened with divine truth, he knows, that *bodily exercise profiteth little* : \* that *God is a Spirit, † and that those who worship him* (acceptably) *must worship him in spirit and in truth*. The christian knows, that God is present in all places and at all times ; and my *Civics* knows this, and sometimes he has realized the Divine Presence with his worshipping people, and been enabled to conceive of God as being intimately nigh ; and has been made really conscious of the favourable and gracious presence of the Lord ; and in consequence of that, has been filled with unspeakable pleasure and delight ; and this has made him sing, *truly the Lord was in this place, and I had evidence that he was with me*. You know that

† Prov. xix, 2.—John xvii. 8  
† John iv. 24.

\* I. Tim. iv. 8.

that this is a thing really true, for you have enjoyed it; and this is the fulfilment of our Lord's own gracious promise, *Lo! I am with you, &c.*† *And where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* All who read and understand the Bible, know this to be a real fact; but you have proved it. No person, however, will desire the enjoyment, but those know it is to be enjoyed. And till a man knows this he cannot be a spiritual worshipper. Knowledge, spiritual knowledge, then, is absolutely necessary to spiritual worship; the latter cannot be, where the former is not enjoyed,

3. But Faith is also essentially necessary, § *for without faith it is impossible to please the Lord*; and certainly impossible to be spiritual worshippers of God. It is not only necessary to know that these are the privileges of the saints, but if we would be acceptable worshippers of the great Jehovah, we must have a realizing faith in the truth of those things: \* it is not enough to assent to them as true, but he who worships God, must believe, not only in his existence, but in the truth of his gracious promises,† and that he fulfils his word to all them who put their trust in him, and who expect his gracious presence and blessing. It is the business of faith to take him at his word; and to expect the blessing he has promised to give us. The spiritual worshipper enters the Lord's house relying on his word of promise, praying for the blessing promised; trusting that the Lord will be as good as his word, and make him feel he is with him of a truth. By this faith the true christian honors the Lord more than by any thing else that he can perform. To take the Lord at his word; firmly believing we shall have every thing from him, that is good for us, is to pay him spiritual and acceptable worship; and the more we abound in this holy confidence, the more we shall know of his love, and the more we shall honor and

† Matt. xx. 20.

§ Heb. xi. 6.

\* Heb. xi. 1.

† Mark ix. 23.—Luke xvii. 10.

and glorify him. And without faith we cannot worship God acceptably at all, nor perform any act of acceptable devotion. The true worshipper enters into the spirit of St. Peter's words, at the house of Cornelius; *He that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him,*|| &c. But in the next place,

4. To whomsoever faith is given, of the kind before described, there is also holy love¶ produced in such souls, both to the Lord himself, and the worship he has appointed\* in his earthly courts; and this is necessary to constitute our worship spiritual and acceptable; *David* describes the very heart of every true worshipper, in these words: *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honor dwelleth.*† This shews the sacred delight which a good man has in divine worship; and they who feel this sacred pleasure, desire the return of the Sabbath,‡ and their spiritual employments in the House of God, as much, nay more, than their necessary food; and the several means which divine grace has appointed, are more desired by them than much fine gold. In waiting thus before the Lord, they find knowledge increased, their understandings are more and more enlightened; faith is increased in strength and vigour; love kindles into divine delight; and the soul sees, that being in person accepted in the Beloved, the humble worship it essays to render to the Lord, is accepted also in the same way. But in the next place,

5. Delight,§ also enters into the nature of spiritual and acceptable worship; for by this is the true worshipper actuated. Solemn delight and sacred pleasure in the souls of the Lord's people, make them resemble the worship of heaven, in their humble attempts below: and in these holy exercises all their powers are employed

|| Acts x. 33, 34. 43.  
(Charity, i. e. Love).

¶ Gal. v. 6.—I. Cor. xiii. 3.

\* Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10.

† Psalm xxvii. 8.

‡ Ps. xxvii. 4.—Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

§ Ps. xxxvii. 4.—xcvii. 12.—xov. 1. 2.

employed, in prayer and praise, in hearing the divine word, and in commemorating the Redeemer's death, their souls are engaged in delightful meditation on the wonderful love and astonishing kindness of our God and Saviour. This fills them at the same time, with holy pleasure and deep humiliation—With pleasure, to see their own personal interest|| in redeeming love; with deep humiliation, at a sight and sense of their own vileness and depravity;¶ and this is perfectly consistent the one with the other. Deep self-loathing on account of our sinfulness, and solemn delight in divine worship, are feelings which the true worshipper is well acquainted with: yea, and whoever has felt the humbling influence of the former, will not be long a stranger to the latter; for indeed they are consequent the one on the other; for says our Lord himself, *He who humbles himself shall be exalted.\** So that if the former is felt, the latter will be enjoyed. Then we may say, that self-abasement and complacency in God, are certainly evidential of spirituality in divine worship; and the happy souls who are blest with these feelings are of the number of the Lord's true worshippers. Therefore,

6. Those who thus worship God in spirit and truth, are blest with holy *fervor* in the exercise of divine worship. They are fervent in prayer, lively in praise; and they hear the word for themselves; as candidates for a happy eternity. They do not go to the House of God to sleep there, but to engage in divine worship, to receive spiritual benefit, and to pay unto God their lively thanksgivings for all his mercies. Animated with a sense of the greatness of their solemn and sacred employment, their every power awakes into lively exercise, and kindles into holy devotion. Yet it must be confessed, that at times (and alas! too often) they find this dull body a clog that bares them down to earth; yet they are not habitually overcome by its dulness; and when they are beset with its influence

|| Phil. iii. 3.

¶ Rom. vii. 24.

\* Luke xiv. 11.

fluence, and langour and weariness seizes them, it is an adversary, and the most unwelcome of all guests : and then their language is,—though alas ! this dull body is become weary *in* the service of our God, yet we are not weary *of* it : though our flesh is faint and weary, yet our spirits are still willing, and we ardently long to be able to worship our heavenly Father perfectly, and eternally, as the heavenly host do ; this is our ardent desire and prayer, and we wait and watch for the answer of peace which our God has promised to bestow upon us, with the earnestness of those who watch for the morning ; yea with greater ardour than they. But this leads me to observe in the next place,

7. That watchfulness\* in the House of God, is also necessary to keep up life and spirituality in divine worship : I mean not to say, that we can make ourselves as lively and spiritual as we please, or that we can give efficacy to the means to make us so ; but I *do* say, that we can and ought to watch and pray against vagrancy of thought, and dulness and inattention in the means of grace ; and without this our hearts will be wandering like the fool's eye, to the ends of the earth, and our worship become as profitless as the wandering of our hearts is sinful in the sight of the Lord : and as wandering thoughts disengage our souls while we appear before him in his earthly courts, they powerfully tend to make our worship to consist of bodily exercise only. Surely then, this sort of worship cannot be a spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God ;† but a mere mockery, and an insult to the Majesty of Heaven. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to our being spiritual worshippers, that we keep up a constant watch against vain thoughts, at all times, but more especially in the House of God. For surely we have found to our cost, that when unwatchfulness and inattention have crept on us, and taken us off our guard, stupidity and dulness have seized our souls, and we have found no more benefit by the means  
in

§ Pf. cxxx. 5.

\* Luke xii. 37.

† Rom. xii. 1, 2.

in which we have been engaged than the seats we sit on. All which, shews how necessary it is that we should watch as well as pray in the public means of grace ; and in those also of a private nature, or otherwise our worship is like to consist of a *form only*.† But I must observe,

8. That all acceptable worship is performed in the *Name of Jesus*, and accepted of the Father through his mediation.\* But as this has been touched on by you, my *Civics*, in your inferences from the observations I made in the foregoing part of this dialogue on the Divine Nature and Attributes ; it is enough just to mention it here. Suffice it to say, that the persons of the true worshippers are accepted in the Beloved, and so is their worship. Therefore, all true christians worship God in the *Name of Christ*, and no other worship is, or can be accepted with him, from any one of Adam's fallen family. Consequently, self-righteous souls who trust in themselves, and approach God in their own names, are not true worshippers.

Now, my *Civics*, what say you ? has your worship consisted in a sound knowledge of God, and a saving faith in Jesus Christ ? Do you now feel real love to him, and spiritual delight in his worship ? Does that delight enkindle in you a holy fervor, and a constant watchfulness ? If so, then are you a regenerate soul, born again of the Holy Ghost ; and a worshipper of God in spirit and in truth.

*Civics*. Dear *Evangelista*, your observations have awakened within me a mixture of hope and fear. I believe I can say, in sincerity, I feel and enjoy a very small measure of each of these graces you have now mentioned. That I have had a measure of spiritual light imparted to my mind, I believe is a reality ; for I am sure I know *that* of the Divine Character, of my own vile heart, and of the Saviour's worth, which lately I was a total stranger to. And, if my heart deceives me not, I have a small measure of spiritual life

† II. Tim. iii. 5-

\* I. John i. 3.—John xv. 16.

life implanted in my soul, for I can say, I feel delight, fervor, and watchfulness; and I believe I have fed on the divine word with great delight; and that a favor of the same rests on my spirit. But after all it is so little, when compared with what it ought to be, that I hesitate to say, it is real; but I own I hope it is so, and desire to praise my gracious Saviour for ever and ever, for what he has done for me and in me.

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, the smallness of your graces is no proof at all against the reality of them, but the contrary; for in nature, we know, that the smallest child living, is a real child, and has all the parts of a man, though not the stature of a man: so grace in the soul, the smallest grain is real, and the change wrought thereby is as real in kind, as that of the greatest saint; though it be not so great in degree. There are degrees in spiritual growth as well as in natural; hence the apostle *John* writes to little children, young men, and fathers in the church of Christ.\* But the gracious change in the little child, was as real and as saving as that in the young man in Christ; and that in the young man as genuine as that in the father. Consequently, my *Civicus*, however small your faith, love, and delight may now be, yet a spiritual existence is given you, and the all-important change is real, and you are now a spiritual infant, or little child in the divine life: and every one knows that an infant is not born a man, though it has the life, limbs, and members of a man; yet it is but a man in embryo, or imperfect growth. But surely no one will say it is not of the human species, because it is an infant; nor will any say of a young boy, he is not of human kind, because he is not so tall, so strong, or so wise as a man. But every wise man knows, and every one of common sense understands this, that nature has its growth; the babe grows to a lad, the lad grows to a young man, and the young man at length becomes a father; and thus we are taught by our apostle to con-

ceive

\* I. John ii. 12 to 14.



ceive of spiritual growth. Every father owns his youngest babe as his child, as much as he owns the son who is arrived at manhood ; and indeed, the relation is all the same : and it is just so in grace ; the youngest infant in the church of Christ is as really a child of God, as the person grown to spiritual manhood ; and though he is neither so spiritually *wise, tall, or strong*, as a father in Christ is, yet his regeneration is as real, his state as safe, and his salvation as certain. But let us not forget that grace has its growth, and that there is no standing still in the divine life ; but where the good work is begun,\* there is necessarily a going forward ; an increase in knowledge, in faith, love, and every grace ; but here also we must make distinctions, lest we weaken the hands of such as God would have strengthened. It is clear, that children in natural life, are liable to and actually have their disorders and sicknesses, which in many impede their growth, and makes them look pale and sickly. Is not this the case spiritually with many of the real children of grace ? Have they not their spiritual complaints ? Is it not the case with them all, in a greater degree or a less, that they have their constitutional evils,† some vile temper or corrupt inclination which mars their growth in a great degree, breaks their peace and defiles their souls ? No doubt this is the case, or the Apostle's exhortation to the Hebrews, to lay aside every weight and the sin which easily besets them, would be without either meaning or importance ; but this cannot be. Therefore, the diseased in spirit must neither be cast away nor neglected. Nor is the case of such souls inconsistent (in an absolute sense) with the real possession of divine grace, for though they are sick they are not dead, and the feeling of their maladies proves they are alive, and those who are spiritually alive now, shall live for ever. Now, my *Civics*, I feel persuaded that you really experience what I say ; and if so, then not a shadow of a doubt remains but you are a worshipper of God in spirit and in truth.

\* Phil. i. 6.

† Heb. xii. 1.

*Civicus.* I really think, my *Evangelista*, that I have a measure of this experience, and I wish to be truly thankful for it; but I am conscious that I am but a poor diminutive dwarf notwithstanding.

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, do you know that the scripture holds forth the growth of a soul in grace, under the similitude of the progression of light? You may remember what the wise man says; *That the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.\** The path here spoken of is the spiritual experience of a christian, who is accepted of God in Christ, and justified in his righteousness imputed to him; and sanctified by his grace implanted in him. The former, is at once and for ever complete; but the latter, goes forward by degrees, and often to the believer, by imperceptible degrees. But as the light never stops in its progress, so the work of sanctification, cannot be so impeded as not to go forward. True, in the natural world, after the day has dawned, and the morning arrived, clouds and storms may arise and tempestuous weather may darken the hemisphere and incommode us much; nevertheless, the light proceeds to the meridian, and makes the day, though by imperceptible degrees, to common observers, yet to the philosopher, and the man of observation, it is plain and evident, and they know it well. So in the divine life, the work is begun by the divine hand, and the light of heaven begins to shine upon the mind, like the twilight of the approaching morning.† At first, just perceivable, but from that moment it goes forward, though sometimes by slow and imperceptible degrees for a while; for the storms of temptation and the clouds of innate corruptions soon darken the light, and make the prospect of the soul very dark and gloomy, and fills the mind with fear. But the Spirit, like a heavenly wind,‡ blows these fogs away, and the light of heaven shines gloriously

\* Prov. iv. 18.

† II. Peter. i. 19.

‡ Cant. iii. 16.  
John iii. 8.

ously on the mind :§ and though for a while the work of grace seemed to be impeded, yet it really went forward, for it killed the pharisaic pride and self-conceit, which lay dormant within, and the mind is hereby made more self diffident, and more dependent on Christ, more charitable to others, more watchful against temptation, and the first risings of sin. But, this is discovered to the mind by fresh communication of divine light, and that light makes this truth clear and plain, and then the mind becomes calm and serene, which before was tempest tossed,|| and much disquieted.

Thus the soul proceeds in sanctification, in the midst of storms, faith is strengthened, humility increased, and peace and love made to grow ; and the Saviour becomes more precious than ever. Thus we see that the work of grace on the soul, is carried on towards perfection, from the moment it is begun, in a gradual way, and that it is not perfected at once, nor fully, till the soul puts off the robes of mortality and enters into eternal life.

The path of the just, or the christian's growth in grace, is justly compared to the shining light, both in its commencement, progression, and completion. Agreeable to this, is the idea our Lord gives us of the same thing, when he compares it to the growth of corn after it has been sown in the earth ;\* he observes there is first a springing up, then the blade, after that, the corn in the ear : and applies this to the Kingdom of God within us. By all which he shews us how he begins his work in our souls, and the manner in which he is pleased to carry it on ; by the light of his word and the teachings of his Spirit. But remember, that small beginnings are real, and therefore not to be despised or neglected, but nourished and cherished. The spiritual babes† must be fed with the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.

For

§ Pf. xcvi. 11—xxx. 5. || Isa. liv. 11. \* Mark iv. 26 to 28.

† I. Pet. ii. 2.

For in the natural world, a child must be long fed and nourished before it becomes a man : and in the spiritual world, the babe in grace must be long instructed and comforted by the gospel and its precious doctrines and promises, even till it is fully perfected in love and holiness, and ripened for eternal glory. Now my dear *Civics*, I hope you see your features in this mirror I have set before you, and that you can discern the face of the new creation on your mind ; and that, consequently, you worship God in spirit and in truth, and that you are one of his adopted children.

*Civics.* Dear *Evangelista*, I think I can, as you say, see my features in this mirror ; and though I am conscious of the remaining of many dark spots ; yet I trust they are but the spots of my father's children,\* for I can now say, I believe (though not so strongly as I could wish) that the new creation† is wrought, and I am a true worshipper.

*Evan.* I am glad of it my friend, and permit me now to make another observation to you ;—though the Lord makes use of appointed means to prepare his people for glory ; yet it is clear from scripture, that he could do it at once, as he did the penitent dying thief on the cross, if he saw good to do so ; but he chuses to adopt means, and time, to disciple them, as well as to cherish them, and to make them shine as lights in this world, for the good of others. Therefore, they must suffer trials and temptations, and undergo difficulties, that they may learn more and more to trust in him, and teach others by their example. It is not his general method, to ripen his people for glory as soon as converted (though no doubt a converted soul would be taken to heaven, if it left the body the next minute) ; but as the Lord has chosen his own appointed way, let you and I cheerfully submit thereto ; and let not my friend expect to arrive at the stature of spiritual manhood instantaneously, but progressively

\* Deut. xxxii. 5,

† Gal. vi. 15.

gressively; and be content to be first a babe, then a youth, and so grow on to a man in the Lord. Take courage then, dear *Civics*, and remember your heavenly Father never leaves his children, but leads and feeds them to everlasting life, even to every individual of them: let this thought fill you with joy and peace in believing.

*Civics.* Dear *Evangelists*, I feel the divine influence and energy of those truths you have advanced, and must acknowledge I have found mental enlargement, spiritual consolation, and an expansion of ideas while you have opened to me those glorious truths, and I own I am disposed to rejoice, and wish to offer praise and thanksgiving to our most kind and gracious Lord, who has dealt thus bountifully with me. Oh! what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits.

*Evan.* I rejoice with my friend, and I am happy to partake of his pleasure: the end of your conversion is now answered. Let us therefore sing the following

#### HYMN.

- 1 FOUNTAIN of eternal bliss,  
Is my blest Redeemer, Christ;  
From him living streams do flow,  
Pardon, peace, and glory too.  
He redeem'd my guilty soul  
From the curse to which I fell,  
Call'd me from my native night,  
Chas'd my darkness, gave me light.
- 2 I was ruin'd, lost, and dead,  
Sunk in guilt, and life was fled;  
And my poor degen'rate soul,  
Was by nature black and foul:  
But I'm wash'd and made to shine,  
Through Immanuel's blood divine:  
And restor'd to life and peace,  
Through the great Redeemer's grace.

3 I was naked, poor, and bare,  
Fill'd with soul-distressing fear ;  
But I'm cloth'd with noblest drefs,  
Christ's pure robe of righteousness :  
Shortly in 'it I shall shine  
In the courts of blifs divine.  
Everlasting life and peace,  
Flow to me through Jesu's grace.

4 Glorious great incarnate Lord,  
Let thy soul-reviving word  
Be borne in with power divine,  
On this needy soul of mine.  
Let my spirit on it feed,  
As the way to heaven I speed,  
Till I in the arms of Christ,  
Sing his everlasting praise.

*Civiciis.* Your Hymn\* has more than ever surprized and pleased me, and I am more than ever convinced, that I have been blest with the same feelings as others, whom I believe are the children of God; and it affords consolation to my mind, to find those whom I esteem eminent for piety and christian attainments, have had the same feelings and convictions as myself; and I am the more strengthened in hope, that my own experience is genuine.

*Evan.* It is certainly pleasing and beneficial to hear the experience of others, and to find we have the same experience as they; particularly those who have stood long in the way; and have given good evidence of their being the Redeemer's real disciples: this is pleasing and profitable, and I am happy to have assisted you; but let us not rest here, but press forward to still greater attainments, till we worship our Lord perfectly in the heavenly world. And now you have been entertained and benefited by this discussion on the Divine Nature and perfections, and of the nature of that

\* Those are our best Hymns of praise which express most of our mental feelings.

that worship which is pleasing to God ; and having been enabled to understand those important and sublime truths, and to come to some comfortable persuasion of your own interest in divine favor and mercy, you can submit to parting with the greater pleasure.

*Civicus.* For the sake of christian propriety, I can certainly submit to part : but to continue our delightful conversation, would be infinitely more pleasing. But if we must part, I submit, and hope to meet you at the lecture, and to return from the House of God after divine worship, and renew our conversation.

*Evan.* To that (if spared) I consent, till then I bid my dear *Civicus* adieu.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, adieu, and may heavenly peace be with you.

*A few OBSERVATIONS for the Reader's  
Improvement.*

1. If sound conviction and conversion are truly described in the preceding Dialogues ; then we may see, that wherever, and to whomsoever, the word of the Lord, or, which is the same thing, the Gospel of Christ, is made a favor of life unto life ; it slays human pride,\* and strips the sinner of every other hope, trust, and confidence, but that of free and full salvation by Jesus only : notwithstanding all the civility, politeness, and morality the awakened person may have been brought up in, and practised through life : for when sound conviction enters the mind, the man does not say, O Lord, I have always been civil, kind, and obliging, and as good as any of my neighbours ; but, O Lord,† I am a vile sinner ; nor do I know any  
saved

\* Gal. vi. 14.—Phil. iii. 9.

† Job xlii. 5, 6.

one on earth so vile as myself; and if I am ever saved, it will be by an act of inconceivable grace, and without any performances of mine, or any thing that I can do; I have done nothing but sin, nor can I ever merit the smallest favor, I must be saved by mere mercy through Christ Jesus, as the vilest of the vile, and not for any thing I can ever do. *Eph. ii. 8, 9.*

2. A doctrine like this, will ever, either provoke or slay the pride of man.—If God set home this humbling doctrine with divine power, then sinners fall under the conviction, and own their guilt, and implore pardon through the Saviour. But if left to themselves, their pride swells like that of Ethicus in *Dialogues I. and II.* and they reject with disdain, the thought of being beholden to grace only for salvation. But the soul who understands the gospel and believes it, is like Civicus, most cheerfully† willing to be saved in the Lord's own way, without any thing of his own.

3. The soul who is thus made willing to be saved by Christ alone, shall be saved, and be brought to know it, and rejoice in it. The joy which is derived from a knowledge of interest in the great Redemption, is vastly superior to any felicity that it is possible for a child of mere nature to have any conception of. Therefore, the gracious soul is the only partaker of true felicity; for the Lord is the strength of the mind, and the portion of the soul forever.‡

4. The soul who has partook of this knowledge, and felt its divine sweets, feels an insatiable thirst after more and greater discoveries of the knowledge of God, the plan of salvation, the person and love of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit; together with a greater acquaintance with every part of the word of God.—*Psalms xix 9, 10.—Phil. iii. 10 to 12.*

5. If this be true of all the children of God; then those hearers of the gospel in these days who content themselves with hearing, and rest in formality;\* have

\* Acts xvi 14, 23. † Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26, 28.—xxxiv. 11, 12.

\* I. Thes. i. 5. compared with II. Tim. iii. 5.



never felt the saving energy of the word, and are consequently yet in a state of nature. Mere attendance on the externals of religion, is as different from the real enjoyment of it, as seeing of food when starving, and the feeding on it to full satisfaction. Seeing of food will not nourish the body, any more than hearing of medicine will cure diseases; and hearing of salvation without partaking of its benefits is equally as vain. A form of godliness without the power, is like a body without a soul; for a dead body soon turns to putrefaction, and becomes loathsome to us, so is mere formality in the sight of God: and a formalist, § is as far from the kingdom of heaven, as a drunkard or a swearer. Therefore, dear reader, whoever thou art, ask thy heart, as in the sight of God, whether thou hast any thing in religion more than mere formality; and supplicate divine mercy, that the gospel may reach thy soul in its saving energy and renovating influence, for if thou hast already felt it, no hurt will ensue by thy feeling more of it, and if thou die without it, thou art lost for ever.—*John iii. 3.* But,

6. Let no sinner despair of pardon who is desirous to obtain it: for surely no seeker of divine mercy will ever be rejected; \* none ever yet were cast out who sincerely sought it, nor shall any such ever be. Therefore, let no sin-sick soul be discouraged, but let them arise and go to Jesus, for he casts out none who come to him, † however vile they may have been. Sinners of every possible description, may obtain pardon from the Saviour, by applying to him for it: and his invitation to sinners is, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. ‡ Therefore,

7. No sin shall prove damning, but final unbelief; he who believes shall be saved, whatever his former character may have been: but he who believes not shall be damned. The wrath of God abides on unbelieving

§ Matt. xxiii. 23. 33. \* Isaiah i. 18.—Mark iii. 28.  
—1 John i. 7. † John vi. 37. ‡ Rev. xxii. 17.

believing rejecters of the glorious gospel and the salvation it holds forth to guilty men. For there is no other way of salvation, and if this be rejected, the rejecters must perish; for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which will devour all such sinners against divine mercy.

Then, oh my soul! what a debtor to mercy art thou? Surely *mercy only* intercepted for thee, mercy only took hold of thee when pursuing madly the road to hell; and such was thy stupidity and madness, that thou wouldest have pursued thy course till arrived at the dismal abodes of eternal destruction, had not Sovereign mercy stopped thy course, turned thy feet into the way of peace, and given the heavenly bent and inclination; and made thee willing in the day of divine power. Faith in Jesus, is thy own free gift, thou God of love and mercy! and but for this I had perished in unbelief. But blessed be thy name forever, that thou hast made me willing, and given me a name and a place among thy redeemed ones. Oh! to grace what a debtor am I—For I am now sure of this, that the mercy which pardons my crimes, can pardon the worst and the vilest.—Lord, send thy gospel success wherever it is preached, and may all the inhabitants of the earth soon hear and know the joyful sound, as far as it may be thy holy pleasure. How precious is the name of Jesus! Jesus the sinner's friend; Jesus the sinner's Saviour; Jesus who saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by him!—Reader, love the Saviour, fly to his arms, and live to his praise. May this be my happiness, O Lord, for thy name sake. *Amen.*

1 " Jesus, I love thy charming name,  
 'Tis music to my ear;  
 Nor to my eyes is light so sweet,  
 Or friendship half so dear.

2 Yes, thou art precious to my soul,  
 My transport and my trust;

Jewels

Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,  
And gold is fordid dust.

3 All my capacious pow'r's can wish,  
In thee most richly meet.  
To make me holy, wise and blest;  
And all that's good or great."

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## DIALOGUE V.

*On the person, work, and offices of the great Redeemer; his humiliation, glorification, and intercession, with the blessed fruits and effects thence resulting to his redeemed people.*

*Evangelista and Civicus having attended an usual lecture on a week evening, returned from the house of God together, and thus they began to converse.*

**CIVICUS.** We have been favoured once more with a rich repast in our father's terrestrial mansion; as usual, have enjoyed the feast without molestation, in comfortable circumstances, for which we are infinitely indebted to our indulgent and gracious Lord.

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, indeed it was a rich repast, I speak from what I have felt, *Pastor* has been much to our purpose, one would think he had been apprized of our design; for he has opened the way to our intended subject so clearly, that I am constrained to feel thankfully for the seasonable assistance now presented us.

*Civicus.* My *Evangelista* is not alone in this, I partake of his pleasure as well as of his gratitude; *Pastor* having opened our way so delightfully, I expect I shall be favoured with a fuller description of the

the Redeemer's person; and a regular display of his person and offices. Your promise, present circumstances, and my own wishes prompt this expectation; I trust I need not fear a disappointment.

*Evan.* That remains to be known, however, I shall have no objection to impart to you what I am able upon the subject; though I am conscious it is but very little. And I begin by observing,

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the chosen and appointed Mediator between God and man.\* The divine Father has elected him† to this infinite dignity, and he has voluntarily undertaken it.‡ Christ is Mediator by the Father's appointment and his own choice; therefore, for the divine honour, and man's salvation, the great Immanuel willingly undertook the office of Mediator, to glorify God and save ruined men. In his love and his pity he undertook to redeem us, and blessed be his name he has effected his work, and brought salvation to us. But,

2. He who undertakes to be Mediator between God and man, must be possessed of infinite dignity, glory, and divinity. This honor is enjoyed by the Saviour of men; for he is the eternal word,§ or the second person|| in the glorious Trinity, inheriting the same nature, perfections, and attributes as the Father. For the apostle Paul says, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him.¶ Another apostle tells us, he is the true God and eternal life.\*\* A great variety of passages in the old testament, which foretell his coming into our world, holds him forth to us as the everlasting God, and the creator of all things, as the governor of all worlds, and the preserver of all things. The evangelists each of them (and particularly John) says, he was in the beginning with God, and that he  
was

\* 1. Tim. ii. 5  
iv. 17, 18. 19.

§ John i. 1, 2.  
¶ Col. ii. 9

† Isa. xlii. 1 to 5—Isa. i. 2. 3.—Luke

‡ Ps. xl. 7, 8.—Heb. x. 6 to 9.

|| 1. John v. 12. compared with ver. 7, 9.

\*\* 1. John v. 20—Jude 25.

was God; and that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made. The same testimony is repeatedly confirmed over and over through the epistles of Paul and Peter; and indeed by everyone of the new testament writers. St. John in the Revelations, holds him forth to us, as *the first and the last,\* i. e. the first grand cause of all things, and the last end of all things.* Which shews us, as with a sun gem, that he is the author of life and death; the judge of quick and dead;† yea, that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, to whom the worship, adoration, and homage of angels and men‡ is most rightfully due; and to him it must be paid. But,

3. Godhead alone cannot redeem (I would speak it with the profoundest reverence). It does not appear from any thing in scripture, that there could be any redemption§ for fallen man, but by the blood of the Redeemer. But pure Deity cannot suffer either death or mutability; for Deity is immortal and impassible, but man must be redeemed by the shedding of blood, even the blood of him who undertakes to redeem, for without shedding of blood there could be no remission. Consequently, it does not appear that pure Deity can be Mediator; or redemption wrought for man, but by taking human nature into union with the divine. This is done in the person of Christ; for he is God and Man in two distinct natures, but one person, and in this glorious person Deity and humanity are united.|| This is evident from the apostle's testimony quoted above, viz: *All the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily.* i. e. The eternity, immutability, and omnipotence, with every other perfection and attribute of the divine nature, dwells in the humanity of the Redeemer. On this ground Peter says to Christ, Lord, thou knowest ALL things, thou knowest that I love thee.¶ Christ says, *all power in heaven and in earth is in his hand;\*\** and tells

• Rev. i. 17. † Matt. xxv. 31, 32.—Rom. xiv. 10.

§ Heb. i. vi.—Phil. ii. 10, 11. § Heb. ix. 22.

|| John i. 14.—Heb. ii. 16. ¶ John xxi. 17.

\*\* Matt. xxviii. 18.

tells his disciples, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midst of them ; \* how many soever of these assemblies there may be throughout the vast dominion of God, yet, in the midst of them all, at the same instant the divine Immanuel is there ; to read every heart, † to know every case and character, to supply every want of every one of his humble followers ; but none besides Deity, can be in more places than one at the same instant ; but Jesus is with his people in every place at all times and for ever ; therefore it is evident, that the omnipresent Deity dwells in the humanity, and that Jesus Christ is God and Man in two distinct natures, but one person.

*Civiciis.* I readily admit, because I am fully convinced, that eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, &c. is peculiar to Deity ; and that the being who is possessed of these must be divine : but for the sake of a thorough investigation of this important truth permit me to assume the disputant for a few moments, and give me leave to propose a question or two to you.

*Evan.* Use your freedom, I agree to your proposal, and will give you the best answers I can.—Begin with your first question.

*Civiciis.* Pray how can Jesus Christ be that God of whom he is the Son ? Is it possible to be Father and Son in one and the same person ?

*Evan.* Your question is curious enough, but as I believe you to be an honest inquirer after truth, I will try to give you a suitable answer. Allow me to observe, your query seems to suggest that you have not understood my meaning relative to the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. Remember then, it is the humanity of Christ we speak of when we call him the Son of God, and not the

\* Matt. xviii. 20.

† Rev. ii. 23.—Isa. lvii. 15.

5. In his mediatorial capacity, he sustains for his people the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. But let me notice his priestly office\* first. In this capacity he has undertaken to satisfy divine justice in their room and stead, by paying to the law that perfect, pure and spotless obedience which it requires, and which they have not paid, and as fallen creatures, never can pay; by offering himself a sacrifice, or sin-offering to God the divine Father, and thereby to make atonement for the sins of all them who are destined to eternal glory. To effect this, their sins were imputed to him; and for which he suffered and died; and his righteousness is imputed to them, by which they are justified and saved. But in the next place,

6. He sustains also the office of a Prophet;† in virtue of this, he teaches his people by his word and spirit, and makes them wise unto salvation. In order to this, he convinces them of their fallen condition, and persuades them powerfully and makes them accept willingly salvation by himself as his own free gift. By the energy of his spirit with his word he makes them know their misery, and shews them the remedy he has himself provided, and inclines them to chuse salvation in his own way. His powerful teaching makes them to know the gospel, and to understand its divine contents, and by it they find the true knowledge of God, and of salvation by Jesus Christ our Lord; and thus he fulfils his prophetic office for all his redeemed ones. But in the next place,

7. He sustains also the office of King‡ in Zion. In virtue of this he subjects the saints to his government, reigns in their hearts, rules their lives, and enables them to live to his praise. They own him as their Lord, and themselves as his disciples and followers. He is the King which the Father has set  
upon

\* Psalm cx. 4.—Heb. v. 5. and vii. 21.—Zec. vi. 12. 13.

† Deut. xviii. 15. compared with John i. 45—Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37, 38. ‡ Psalm ii. 6. & xcvi. 3.—[Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.—Jer. xxiii. 5.—Zec. ix. 9.—John xii. 15.

upon his holy hill ; having a native right as God, and a delegated right as Mediator, to rule as head over all things to his church.\* As the Lord of conscience, he alone has a right to demand our implicit faith in whatever he teaches, and to bind the souls of men to obedience, to whatever he makes known. All his saints rejoice in his reign, and it is to them a source of consolation, that he does and shall reign in their hearts, in his church, and soon over all the earth, and every foe be completely subdued. For in his kingly character, he first subdues his people and makes them his willing disciples;† while by his word and spirit he carries on his conquests, till all the nations submit to his government ; and the whole earth be ruled by him‡ as his own church. Meanwhile he protects his saints, provides for them, and forsakes them not. In his kingly character he has appointed the christian sabbath, and the means and ordinances of his house, for his people's comfort and preparation for glory. Thus he manifests his authority, reigns in the saints, rules in his church, carries on his conquests in the world, and will do so till he is King of nations as well as of saints. In the mean time he feeds his sheep§ in the green pastures of his ordinances, till he crowns them with glory in heaven. As King of Zion, he is also the chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, and christian ministers are raised up and qualified by him for their work as his under Shepherds, to lead his lambs and sheep to those heavenly pastures which his love has prepared for them. As the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, he has an exclusive right to rule the conscience, nor is there any other Lord but him, to whom man is accountable for what he believes. There is no Head of the Christian Church but Jesus : Christ only is King in Zion ; and as SAINTS, we own no other Lord but him. But in the next place,

8. In consequence of his mediatorial character, his life on earth was a state of deep humiliation and abasement ;

\* Eph. i. 22.

† Psalm cx. 3.

‡ Rev. xi. 15.

§ Psalm xxiii. 2, 3.



ment ; for having undertaken to redeem his church, he must submit to suffering both of reproach and pain, to obey and suffer was a principle part of his work on earth. For as a substitute of his people, he must repair the breach they had made, by satisfying divine justice and magnifying the holy law which they have broken, and restoring its honours. Therefore, from his manger-cradle to his cross, he was pursued by adversity in some form or other, till he ascended to glory. Being made in his humanity under the law,\* to redeem his people who were under the law, that they may receive the adoption of sons ; he must, to effect that, submit to a life of sorrow, and a painful and shameful death, even the tormenting death of the cross. All of these he certainly has performed : and now I shall instance a few particulars, how he has effected it.

1. He has fulfilled all righteousness,† moral, ceremonial, and intermediate. All righteousness which the moral law required, he has paid for his people, in their stead. The law's requirements of Adam's children, were perfect, pure, and unfinning obedience;‡ but this not one of them ever paid (or as fallen creatures) ever can. But this the blessed Jesus has yielded to the full ; his life was a course of pure and spotless obedience to all its injunctions in every iota, the utmost of its demands were fully satisfied, and all its precepts honoured and magnified. He came not to destroy either the law or the prophets,§ but to fulfill them, this he has done to perfection. Nor is there the smallest thing imaginable either by angels or men, which he has left unfinished. Therefore, there is not a single point of obedience left for any believer to perform, as a law-fulfiller ; Christ has obeyed it perfectly, and fulfilled it completely. Now it can demand nothing of the believer,|| as a condition of eternal life, for this our divine Surety has paid to the full. But,

\* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

† Matt. iii. 15—Luke iii. 21.

‡ Exod. xx. 1 to 17 ; explained Matt. v. 27, 28, & 48.

§ Matt. v. 17.

|| Eph. ii. 8, 9.

2. He fulfilled all righteousness ceremonially.\* Was the levitical ritual the appointment of Jehovah? Did it require obedience to all its injunctions, of the worshippers of God, under that dispensation as long as it remained?† It did, and Jesus was obedient to it, he gave it all its demands even to the last mite. Did it require circumcision? Behold, Jesus was circumcised, at the time and in the manner which this law required. Did this law require the worship of God to be carried on and kept up in conformity to divine direction? In this also, Jesus complied, and constantly observed its order. Therefore, those whom he healed of the leprosy by miracle, must go and offer to the priest the things which Moses commanded, and by the Saviour's order, though himself did the work. Did this law require various offerings and a continual sacrifice. Behold! Jesus made himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people,‡ and offered himself without spot to God the divine Father, and so paid all his people's debts. Had this law its High Priest who went into the holy of holies by sacrificial blood? Behold, Jesus is our great High Priest,§ who is gone into the holiest of all, by his own blood, having made way for us who believe, to follow him thither. The Kingdom of Heaven is by him opened to all believers. Were the worshippers under that dispensation to be sprinkled with sacrificial blood to render them and their worship acceptable? They were; Jesus also, washes his people in his own blood,|| which was shed to take away their guilt, and to cleanse them from all sin. Was the sacrifice to be offered without the camp? So Jesus suffered without the Gate of Jerusalem.¶ Yea all the sacrifices and offerings, with the \*\*washings, &c. pointed to the coming Messiah, and were typical of him in his redeeming work—To him they pointed, in

\* Luke ii. 22 to 24.

† As long as it remained pointing to the Messiah to come.

‡ Heb. x. 10. 14.

§ Heb. vii. 26 to 28—x. 18.

|| Heb. ix. 20 to 24—I. John i. 7.—Rev. v. 9 I. Peter i. 2.

¶ Heb. xiii. 12.

\*\* Heb. ix. 8 to 14.

his righteousness to his people's account,\* and accepted the offering in their room and stead. Thus, in the everlasting counsel, Christ was a Lamb slain for his people (in purpose and design) not only from the foundation of the world, but from everlasting ages.

The divine purpose of redemption, was first faintly made known to our original parents just after their fall, under the idea of the Woman's Seed ;† and afterwards to Abraham and the patriarchs more clearly ; and much clearer still by the mosaical dispensation, as already noticed. The prophets had still clearer views of the promised Messiah, both of his person and work : and God spake clearly by them, at sundry times and in divers manners ; but at last he spake to us by his Son,‡ whom he has made heir and Lord of all things, and judge of quick and dead, as well as the Saviour of men. But to fulfil all this, the eternal Word took flesh,§ i. e. the nature of man upon him, and clothed himself in human clay ; and after having lived on earth the set time : at the appointed moment he voluntarily gave himself into the hands of barbarous and cruel men.|| As he had fulfilled all righteousness in his life, and every prophecy respecting it, from his cradle to his cross ; so now every thing respecting his death was fulfilled also. His stripes, his bitter agony, and his cruel death were predicted, and he bore it all ; and so finished transgression made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

Now, by him all who believe in him, as the Saviour whom God has appointed, are by his blood redeemed from the curse of the law which they had broken, and his righteousness is imputed to all, and avails for all who are brought to put their trust in him for their full and complete salvation. His death procures them eternal life, his cross procures them crowns of eternal glory, his crucifixion secures their everlasting felicity.

\* I. Cor. i. 30.

† Gen. iii. 15.

‡ Heb. i. 1, 2.

§ Heb. ii. 14, 16.

|| John x. 17, 18.

felicity. Oh astonishing love ! Oh wonderful grace ! Oh blessed Saviour ! And is redemption wrought by thy hands ? Let us love thee with all our hearts and live for ever to thy praise and glory. This is the doctrine of the old testament and the new. Isaiah says, by his stripes we are healed ;\*—that he was bruised for our iniquities ;—that the chastisement of our peace was on him ;—that he bore our sins and carried our griefs ; i. e. the causes of them, which you know are our sins. Daniel says, he was cut off for the sins of his people ;† and all the old testament writers speak the same language. Our Lord himself tells us, he laid down his life for his sheep ;—that he came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. The Apostle Paul says over and over, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. Also, that he is made to believers wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption : that he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes in him :—that by *him* all who believe are justified freely from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.‡ Consequently, the whole church of God and every believing soul, as St. Peter says, is the purchase of the Redeemer's precious blood ; whose sins are all atoned for, by the death of Christ. He died to redeem them, and they are the purchase of his agonies, his sweat, and precious blood.

Thus redemption is effected by the person and work of Christ, and through this redemption are all repenting sinners saved. Surely the great Redeemer shines with infinite glory when viewed in this light ; a glory that out-shines ten thousand suns, and before which all other glories are but comparative darkness. But if we go on to set the first and second Adam in contrast, the glories of Jesus will shine on our minds with double lustre.

\* Isa. liii. 4, 5.

† Dan. ix. 26.

‡ Acts xiii. 39.—Rom. iii. 24.

lustre. For, as the two great covenant heads, who were so by divine appointment, we may compare and contrast them to much advantage; and while the darkness of the former grows ten fold by comparison, the lustre of the latter will be ten thousand fold increased by that means; and thus we shall see the more strikingly the glory of the great Redeemer's person and work. Observe,

1. Adam being the first man, was made pure and perfect, in the divine image,\* i. e. in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, having every grace and virtue in perfection; but was a voluntary agent, having sufficient power to know and to do the will of God: As such, he was the appointed covenant head of all his posterity, standing in their stead, in their law place, and for them to give a true test of real and sincere obedience, when attacked by temptation. But, though he might and could have stood firmly in that state of rectitude and purity; yet, against the divine command,† and the light of his own mind, he yielded to temptation, sinned against God, and brought guilt, degeneracy, and death on all his posterity. Now the guilt of that capital crime descends from father to son till time shall be no more: for the impurity of this sin, like the most deadly poison spreads misery and death over the whole race of Adam; it has marred the whole terrestrial creation. But,

2. Christ is the covenant head of all the elect of God.‡ In that capacity he has wrought deliverance for his people, and by the virtue and efficacy of his mediatorial performances and sufferings, he has brought salvation unto them, and turned away the curse from them, under which they had fallen by the first sin. For, as the guilt of Adam's sin brought degeneracy and death on all his descendants; so, on the contrary, the merit of Christ's active and passive obedience

\* Gen. i. 26, 27. † Gen. iii. 6, 17, 18, 19—Rom. v. 12.

‡ Isa. xlii. 6.—xlix. 8.

obedience has insured eternal life to every believer\* in every generation, and in all the world.

The first Adam by his offence brought ruin and misery on all mankind ;† the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, brought recovery to all the church of God, and confers on every believer present peace and pardon, future felicity, and everlasting glory.‡

The first Adam by sin brought the curse on all the world ;§ But Jesus Christ brings all that terrestrial felicity which is enjoyed on earth ; and in virtue of his redemption, the sun shines on the evil and on the good, and the rain descends on the just and on the unjust. But finally his gospel shall captivate the great mass of mankind,|| and convert the earth to a terrestrial paradise.

All those who live and die under the influence of the fall of the first Adam, are in a state of perdition, and sink to hell ; but all those who are united by faith to Jesus Christ, the second Adam, rise to a state of justification on earth, and of glorification in heaven.

The fall of the first Adam violated the principles of eternal justice, and opened the flood-gates of sin and iniquity, corrupted the whole race of mankind, and brought universal depravity on every child of that fallen family ; and this is the source of universal ruin and misery.\*\* But the obedience and sufferings of the great Redeemer restores honor and satisfaction to divine justice in full, magnifies the righteous law of God, and turns away divine vengeance ;†† restores an infinite number to holiness of heart and life, and thereby stems the torrents of immorality ; lights up in our degenerate world, a vast number of shining examples whose holy lives are to others as so many directories to holiness and true virtue ; and for their  
sakes

\* John x. 27, 28.

† Rom. v. 16.

‡ Rom. vi. 23.

§ Rom. v. 18.

|| Rev. xi, 15.—Dan. vii. 27.

Rev. xx. 6.

\*\* Gen. iii. 17, 18.

†† Isa. xlv. 21 to 23.—chap. liii. 10 to 12.

sakes the world is preserved\* till every elect soul is fully prepared by renovating grace for eternal glory. This I think, sets the glories of the Mediator's person and works, in a point of view which is affecting, astonishing, and glorious!

*Civicus.* Truly so, indeed, I am pleased with the glorious sight, and have felt both enlargement and delight while you have been speaking on this most sublime and interesting subject. But be so good as to allow me to ask you another question. Pray how am I to conceive of the redeemed? are they the whole mass of mankind, or are they a number chosen to be redeemed? Or, in other words, as the divine Father has chosen the person of the Redeemer, has he also chosen the persons of the redeemed?

*Evan.* Dear *Civicus*, I take it for granted, that you will rest assured of the truth of whatever the holy scriptures declare; and if so, I have no doubt of satisfying you fully on this point.

*Civicus.* You have rightly judged, for I certainly do, and I trust ever shall bow to scripture authority, and what you prove by it I hope ever to receive, and that with cordiality of mind.

*Evan.* That is right; I am persuaded then, that you will perceive clearly, that as the divine Father has chosen the person of the Redeemer, so also, he has chosen the persons of the redeemed in him.† This doctrine is clearly stated in the scriptures.—That God has a people whom he has chosen, is taught by Moses and the prophets; by Christ himself‡ and the apostles; and surely if this be proved, I shall gain your free consent.

*Civicus.* If you prove this, I can have nothing to say against it, but shall esteem it my happiness and honor to embrace and avow whatever God has revealed in his word; but in order to this, I must have it proved,

\* Gen. xviii. 32.—I. Sam. ii. 8.—Isa. xliii. 4.

† Rom. ix. 11.—Eph. i. 4.—Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30.

‡ Joh. vi. 37. chap. x. 27, 28. chap. xvii. 9.

proved, for though I respect my friend with cordiality and sincere affection, yet I can take nothing on trust of so important a nature as this. Permit me, therefore, to request, that you proceed to your proof.

*Evan.* Most readily ;—but here it may be proper to observe, that the choice of Abraham's descendants to be the visible church of God on earth, is certainly meant to instruct us in the knowledge and belief that God has chosen a certain number of mankind to compose his church on earth, there to be nourished and prepared for the full enjoyment of him in heaven. It cannot be supposed (I should think) that God selected the nation of the Jews from all other nations for political purposes only ; that seems to be a low and fordid idea, unworthy of infinite wisdom. But if we understand Moses aright in Deut. x. 15, 16 *The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and chose their seed after them, even you ABOVE ALL PEOPLE, as it is this day.* These words shew clearly, that the divine choice of these people and their forefathers, contained something in it infinitely above any thing merely political\* and terrestrial, even the infinite love of God : and though there is reason to believe, that many Jews lived and died in sin ; (for they are not ALL Israel who are of Israel) yet there is sufficient ground to believe, that a great number of these were actually chosen to eternal life, as the end, and to the enjoyment of divine ordinances, as the means. For their example was designed of God to be a light to the dark heathen world (at least to as many as had eyes to see it) to guide them to the true worship of God, and check the gross idolatry of the times.

This then, is the doctrine which the divine choice of the Israelitish nation teaches us, viz : A great number of them were chosen to eternal life in Christ the expected Messiah ; and the line of election ran principally amongst them as a nation ; therefore, it was the divine

\* Isa. xlii. 12, 21.—Luke i. 68 to 74.



divine good pleasure (and that was the only cause)\* that the true worship and visible church should exist among them. The sacrifices and ceremonies of divine worship which God then appointed, for a certain time, were designed to instruct them to expect the Messiah's coming,† and to fore-shew them the glories of his person, and the design of his advent; and also to keep them from the evil customs and abominable practices of the heathens around them, and to separate them to himself, as a peculiar people zealous of good works. To shew the world, that the grace of the Almighty leads all the partakers of it to a life of true holiness as the way, and to heaven as the end.

This was a constant instruction in righteousness to the surrounding nations, a constant condemnation of their evil practices, and these seem to be some of the chief things intended by the divine choice of these people. I should think, my *Civics*, that this must be evident to you.

*Civics*. I freely acknowledge, that you appear to have reason and scripture on your side, so far; but you have not led me through the prophets yet, much less through the new testament; but have the goodness to proceed.

*Evan*. That is my intention.—Observe then, that the attentive and enlightened mind may perceive, as plainly as any thing can be perceived, that the doctrine of divine discrimination runs through the Psalms of David.‡ Hence the benedictions§ on God's true worshippers, and the friends of the expected Messiah and his disciples, and the awful imprecations of divine vengeance|| on his, and their enemies. For David in his official capacity,¶ was a type of Christ; and his imprecations on the enemies of Christ and his church, seem

\* Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8.

† Heb. x. 1.

‡ Psa. iv. 3.—xxxvii. 28—xxxiii. 12—lxv. 4—lxxxiv. 4.

—xcvii. 10 to 12.

§ Psa. ciii. 3, 4, 5.—cvi. 3.

—cxii. 1 to 4—cxv. 13.

|| Psa. cix. 6 to 20.

¶ Jer. xxxiii. 15 to the end.

seem to me to be prophetic of the doom of all those who live and die the opposers of Christ and salvation by him. Hence too, his earnest prayers for the prosperity and happiness of God's church and chosen. The doctrine of the Psalms is clearly this. God then had, and he now has, a number true worshippers who believed and trusted in the great Mediator, and these are the Lord's chosen, his Zion, and his Jerusalem; and to them is all conceivable blessedness promised, and it will in due time and order be imparted.

The same doctrine is found to run through the prophecies of Isaiah,\* of Jeremiah,† and the other prophets.

In the new testament, our Lord's disciples are called by him, his Sheep,‡ and the wicked (who die in their sin) are by him called Goats.§ Likewise, he calls them *his elect*;|| i. e. his chosen people. The apostle Paul calls the elect, *vessels of mercy*,¶ afore prepared unto glory: but the finally impenitent, whom Christ calls Goats, the apostle calls vessels of dishonour; and also, vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.\*\* The vessels of wrath, *made so by their own sin*, are likewise characterized by the appellation of *the seed of the Serpent*; and our Lord calls them the children of the wicked one.†† These wilfully, willingly, and determinedly persist in their rebellion against God, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; and never repent of their crimes, but persist in them till they perish in their sin. Indeed, this would be the case of all Adam's fallen family, were not distinguishing grace to make the important change in them necessary to salvation; for fallen nature is now bent to evil, *only, continually, and perpetually*. But those who are saved are saved by grace, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and

\* Isa. vi 9 to 11. chap. xxvi 20, 21

† Jer. xxxi. 3, 11. chap. xxxiii. 11, 14.

‡ John, x. 27. § Matt. xxv. 33. || Matt. xxiv. 31.

¶ Rom. ix. 23. \*\* Rom. ix. 23.

†† Matt. xiii. 38.

and the mere good pleasure of the divine will, is the only moving cause of it.

This is the doctrine the scriptures teach; therefore, the scope of the gospel is summarily this: God, who sees all things from eternity to eternity with infinite precision, fore-knew perfectly the fallen condition of man, provided redemption for him, in the person of the Mediator. In him chose to everlasting life, an infinite, but to him a certain and definite number;\* which none but himself can number, out of every generation on earth, from the beginning to the end of time; and this infinite number is to the Almighty so *certain* and *definite*, that they will never be added too, and can never be diminished. For these, the great Redeemer became a substitute, and for them put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;† brought in everlasting righteousness; and they all will be drawn by divine power and grace, to believe in and rely on the Saviour, and stand complete before God with full acceptance; being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, justified in the Redeemer's righteousness, adopted into the family of heaven, sealed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost,‡ and in divine strength are enabled to persevere to the end. All this is the effect of free, sovereign, and unmerited grace; through the redemption which Christ has finished.

But I now begin to think of parting, and at our next interview, to converse more particularly on regeneration and effectual calling.

*Civicius.* Have patience a little, my Evangelista, I have one question more to ask you before we part. You have evidently held forth to me the doctrine of particular redemption; but pray you, would not divine grace be much more magnified by placing all men without exception in a salvable state? And could not the redemption of Christ avail for all, as well as for some? And, if so, why not?

*Evan.*

\* II. Tim. ii 19, 20—John xvii. 12. chap. vi. 39. 40, 44, 64.

† Heb. ix. 26.

‡ Eph. i. 13.

*Evan.* I acknowledge, that such a doctrine as you now suggest, is to be found in the creed of Arminius and his disciples, but I am sure not in the scriptures of truth ; and for that reason, I reject it altogether. Imagine not that free grace is to be judged of by the numbers it saves from the ruins of the fall, so much as it is from the characters and conditions of those whom it saves, .

We have before proved, that man, as a fallen sinner, is consequently under the curse of the violated law. Those who are partakers of salvation, were not entitled to it for any merit of their own, for they had none, but as all other men are so are they, i. e. fallen and guilty : none had any right to expect mercy from God for any thing they ever did or ever can do. Therefore, it would have been but just in the Almighty to have rewarded all men according to their deserts ; then all must have perished. Grace is infinitely glorious, and above all conception magnified, in saving the objects of its own choice from among the fallen family of apostate Adam. Therefore, talk no longer of its being more magnified than it is, for it is not to be conceived of by a *partial* restoration of ALL, but by the *complete*\* salvation of those who are the objects of its choice, who might justly have been doomed to hell.

But you ask, could not the redemption of Christ avail for all, as well as for some ? No doubt of that, if God saw good so to appoint ; for it not only can, but actually does avail for all the purposes to which it is designed. Therefore it is, that all whom the Almighty intends to save, are saved by it. But what right have you and I to say to God, why, or what doest thou ? Have we any demand on him for any service we have done him ? Surely this you will not say. Then ask no more, why should it not avail for ALL : wonder at and adore the grace that saves ANY through it ; for surely it is inconceivably great.

But

\* Heb. vii. 25.—I. Thef. i. 4, 5—II. Thef. ii. 13.

But, what is it you mean by placing all men in a salvable state? Do you clearly understand this matter?

*Civicus.* By a salvable state I mean a possibility of being saved, and that the redemption of Christ has so far availed for all men, that they may be saved if they will. For the curse of Adam's sin being removed from all men by the death of Christ, at least so far that all may be saved, if they will believe and repent; and none will be punished for original sin only. This is what I mean by a salvable state.

*Evan.* I thought you meant this. But do you not include in it, that man now has it in his own power to turn to God when he pleases?

*Civicus.* Certainly the idea of a salvable state includes this, or else it can mean nothing; for to talk of a possibility of being saved, with a power to apply to the Saviour, must be a contradiction in terms.

*Evan.* Just so, and worse than that, the whole scheme contradicts the express words of Christ himself on this subject; for he tells us plainly, that no man can come unto me, except the Father draw him.\* The power to believe and repent, comes not from the human will, or any human agency, but from God, and from him only. But this proves not your notion of the partial salvation of all the human race, but of the certain salvation of all those who believe and repent. For that power which works faith and repentance in any sinner's soul, is divine; and the believing and repenting sinner's salvation is not a *may be*, but a *certainty*. Did you ever read or hear of a single individual who turned and repented without the special influences of the Holy Ghost? I am persuaded you never did, nor any other person; nor was there ever a single instance of the kind, nor will there ever be. For salvation by Jesus Christ, is not natural to fallen man, nor to men in any sense; for the law of nature is, salvation by human merit, and for a man's own righteousness

\* John vi. 44. 65.

righteousness and personal obedience ; and not by a substitute. All carnal men retain this bias till God by the power of his word and Spirit slays it, and gives the mind an evangelic direction. No natural man thinks of being beholden to another for righteousness ; his own merit is all he thinks of, to find acceptance with God. But you know this is as contrary to every gospel principle, as light is to darkness, or heaven to hell. Therefore, your salvable state is a *momentary*, or worse ; it is an *ignis fatuus*, calculated to lead men into the bogs of carnal security, and to blow them up with pharisaic pride.

As to your possibility of being saved, I answer ; to God all things are possible ; if he chuses, nothing can hinder the accomplishment of his choice ; and if he refuses, none can influence him to alter his mind. He does all his pleasure in heaven and on earth ; for he is in *one mind*,\* and none can turn him ; and what his soul desireth *even that* he doeth. Salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,† but of God who sheweth mercy. Consequently, if he wills that all men shall be saved, no doubt they will infallibly be so ; for nothing can prevent what he absolutely wills. But the scripture informs us, that the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations who forget God ; i. e. all finally impenitent finners : and we read that Judas,‡ Dives,§ Ananias,|| Saphira, &c. are gone there already ; and our Lord says, that in the last great judgment, he will say to many who lived and died in their hostility to him ;—Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.¶ Therefore, salvation is the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; and all the cavils of all the cavillers that ever lived, or ever shall live, can never alter it in the smallest matter. The damnation of the wicked, is the righteous judgment of God for the crimes

\* Job. xxiii. 13.—Psa. xxxiii. 21.—Isa. xlvi. 10.

† Rom. ix. 16. ‡ Acts i. 26.—John xvii. 12.

§ Luke xvi. 23. || Acts v. 5. 10.

¶ Matt. xxv. 41. 46.

crimes of those who fall under it, and their wilful persisting therein. The judgment of the wicked is the due reward of their evil deeds, and God is just and righteous in the punishment of their crimes. But he saves freely and of his own good pleasure, all who come to him through Christ, to the honour of the riches of his grace and mercy. But your salvable state is a mere bankrupt business, or a compounding matter between the infinite God, and miserable sinners; and its tendency is evidently this: God has done his part to redeem and save man, and he must do the rest; and so betwixt both the breach is made up in the imagination of such deluded men. This is the essence of your salvable state, and I make no doubt but you mean as much when you use the terms.

*Civicius.* Certainly, I do mean to hold out that idea by the use of these terms; and is not the plain meaning of the following scriptures a proof of what I have said:—God willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;—Christ is the Saviour of all men:—he tasted death for every man. Our Lord himself says, ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Are not these the declarations of scripture?

*Evan.* Doubtless they are, and there are others of a similar tendency, and to understand their true import is of infinite importance. But I have before noticed to you, this self-evident truth, that to *will* to be saved by Christ only (and there is no other way of salvation) is above nature in its utmost efforts: \* and unless you can prove this monstrous proposition, viz: that natural men can do supernatural works, and effect that for which they have no capacity; your salvable state is a nostrum of no value; and a plaister that will not stick; it is an imaginary something which leads men farther and farther into error, and little doubt can remain, that its pernicious tendency has led many into the dead sea of pharisaic delusion.

For

\* John i. 13.—Matt. xi. 25 to 27.

For the scriptures you have quoted to prove this false position, have a very different meaning. They certainly intend something very interesting and important, and it seems to be as follows :

1st. It is of an inviting nature,\* to sinners to turn from their evil ways.

2d. It is declaratory, that those who return shall find mercy,† whatever their crimes may have been.

3d. That every repenting sinner is interested in the death of Christ,‡ and not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by him.§

4th. That to will to be saved by our Lord Jesus Christ, is a proof that such are accepted with God.|| There never was a single sinner who willed to be saved in the gospel way, but was actually saved ; and the scriptures you have quoted are to be understood in this way.

I hope from this time you will see the propriety of what I have advanced.

*Civics.* I am digging for truth as they do for precious ore, and 'tis for that purpose, you know, that I assumed the disputant ; but you may assure yourself I see where the truth lies, and rejoice in the discovery.

But I too, begin to think of parting for the present. Farewell, dear *Evangelista*.

*Evan.* Dear *Civics*, farewell, till our next meeting.

## DIALOGUE

\* As Isaiah i. 18.—chap. lv. 6, 7.

† John vi. 37.

‡ Acts v. 31. § I. Thess. v. 9.

|| John vi. 44, 65.



## DIALOGUE VI.

*On the exaltation of Christ, and the Benefits which flow from the Redemption he has effected.*

**EVANGELISTA.** Dear *Civicus*, I am happy to be spared to the return of another opportunity to recommence our useful and pleasing conversation.

*Civicus.* I am equally delighted with the pleasing enjoyment, and am impatiently desirous to have your observations begun.

*Evan.* I am willing to oblige you; and therefore observe,

1. Jesus Christ having finished the work\* which in his humiliation the divine Father had appointed him to perform, both in his active and passive obedience; he arose from the dead,† burst the barriers of the grave, came forth, and shewed himself to his sorrowful disciples and comforted them with his presence and benedictions for forty days.‡ He then, in their presence, and on the predetermined spot,§ commanded the clouds to escort him to heaven: and they obeyed his mandate, and lifted him to the right hand of the Majesty on high. No doubt he was welcomed into the celestial courts with the loud shouts of the angelic hosts, and the songs of the redeemed already in heaven, from the foundation of the world; and I think I hear the music and the song.

ANGELS.

LIFT up your heads O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of Glory shall come in.

RESPONSE

\* John xix. 30 & xvii. 4.      † Matt. xxviii. 6.—Mark xvi. 6.  
Luke xxiv. 6.—John xx. 14 to 18      ‡ Acts i. 3.  
§ Acts i. 9, 10, 11.

RESPONSE ASKING.

Who is the King of Glory ?

ANSWER.

The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle !

ENCORE.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of Glory shall come in.

RESPONSE.

Who is the King of Glory ?

SAINT'S REPLY.

The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory !  
Even him who hath loved us,  
And washed us from our sins  
In his own most precious blood :  
To him give we glory ;  
For he hath redeemed us, and made us  
Kings and priests unto God, and  
We shall reign with him for ever.\*

Thus our great Immanuel is welcomed to the heavenly mansions, and there is he crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, i. e. the universal Lord of all ; and enthroned on the right hand of God.† All worlds and all creatures are subjected to his dominion ; and an innumerable company of angels and men are to be his willing subjects ; and those who will not submit to his sceptre, shall bow to his rod.‡ *For all the angels of God must worship him ;* § and all those who are saved by him, shall cheerfully submit to him, and freely own him as their Saviour and Lord. In his exaltation then, he is the Lord of life and glory,|| the arbitrer of

\* Psa. xxiv. 7 to 10.—Rev. v. 9 to the end.

† Acts ii. 33. 36—Phil. ii. 9. ‡ Psa. ii. 9.—lxxxix. 2, 3.  
Rev. ii. 29.—xii. 5. § Heb. i. 6. || Heb. i. 3 9, 10.

of divine providence, and the judge of quick and dead.\* Having redeemed his people, he is engaged to make them ALL the partakers of the benefits of his death and sufferings, and to bring them all to reign with him.

His presence in heaven is prevalent with God, and the scars of his wounds are vocal, and this is their demand : *Father, we will, that the souls purchased by blood divine shall all be called by effectual grace and converted to thee; be pardoned, justified, adopted and sanctified; and finally glorified with thee.*

Besides, Christ as Lord of all, has all power in heaven and earth in his hands, and he saves whomsoever he wills to be saved :† therefore, those whom he intercedes for, are infallibly certain of the benefits of his redemption, and of the crowns he has secured for them in the world of glory. Let us sing—

“ He ever lives to intercede  
Before his Father's face;  
Give him, my soul, thy cause to plead,  
Nor doubt the Father's grace.”

WATTS.

But 2. From his exalted throne in glory, he sends forth his spirit with his word‡, and calls in succession his scattered and straying sheep from their wanderings and their carnality, gives them ears to hear his voice, and hearts to understand his word : powerfully allures and inclines them to hear and know the Gospel ; and thereby begets in them a feeling sense of their sin and misery; and makes them willing to be saved by him in his own way. Where this is effected in any soul, there conversion is actually wrought ; and all such souls are turned from sin and self to Christ and holiness, and destined to eternal glory.

Regeneration is one of the capital benefits which flows

\* Matt. xxv. 31. 34, 40.

† John vi. 21, 22. & xvii. 24.

‡ Acts i. 4, 5.—iv. 31 to 33. & x. 44.—Matt. xxviii. 20.

flows from electing love,\* through the redemption which Christ has wrought. Nor have any a right to claim an interest in his death, but those who are born of the Holy Spirit.† This heavenly birth‡ is a work, in which none is an agent but the divine power; human agency can effect nothing here, either totally or partially, it is wholly wrought by the Holy Ghost. The partakers of this essential and all-important change, are as passive in it as an infant in its own formation, or as the matter of which the world is made was, in its own formation. Therefore it is, that the saints are said to be created anew in Christ Jesus,§ unto good works. Those to whom the divine privilege of sonship is given, are born (says John the apostle) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. These words hold forth this very evident truth; that the nature of this work bespeaks it to be divine; wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. For the children of God are the passive recipients of the divine bounty, in this great change. But I observe in the next place,

3. That this change is essential to salvation. For our Lord himself declares, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*|| He has no native meetness for it, nor any capability of enjoying it; his carnal propensities must be slain, and a spiritual capability to enjoy God and glorify him, must be imparted to him. Without this, no man can enjoy true happiness, either in the present life, or the life to come; for holiness and happiness are inseparably connected, nor can they be parted; for a God of unspotted purity and holiness can have no communion with impurity and sin, nor impure sinners with a God of spotless purity.¶ Therefore, in order that his own children may be brought to that happiness to which they are appointed, it is essentially necessary that they be born from

\* Rom. viii. 29.

† Rom. viii. 9.

‡ John i. 12.

§ Eph. ii. 10.

|| John iii. 3.

¶ Heb. xii. 14.

from above; for it is this which constitutes their meetness for glory. Consequently, all who go to heaven are prepared for it by this heavenly birth, in the present life; none can go there without it. All those who grow up to be capable of the exercise of reason, and to discern good from evil, or sin from virtue, must not only be thus renewed in the spirit of their minds by the Holy Spirit, but they must give evidence of it\* in their lives and conduct. By their good fruits of piety and true holiness, they must evince their relationship to the King of Kings, and prove their regeneration to be real, by a life of new obedience, that they may be as evidently known to be the disciples of Christ, as a good tree is by the fruit that it bears. But, this fruit of true holiness can never be borne by a carnal heart, for though a natural man may be outwardly moral, civil, and strictly honest to his neighbours; yet, if he has nothing but the polish of nature and education, he is destitute of faith and love, and the true knowledge of God; and is, consequently, a corrupt sinner,† before him who seeth not as man seeth. It is not in the power of moral suasion, or a virtuous education to influence the heart of man to bring forth the fruits of faith, love, and new obedience. This is not the produce of nature, but it is communicated to the souls of believers by divine influence. Consequently, a man must be blest with the graces of faith and love, before he can bring forth the fruits thereof. But these graces are imparted in regeneration. Therefore, all who go to heaven must be born again. However, lest I should weaken the hands of any who are already weak, let me observe to you,

4. By what internal marks and evidences we may know this work is begun in ourselves. Here I would say, that it begins in deep conviction of our fallen and guilty state by nature and practice; the renewed soul is made to feel his lost condition, and to see the absolute need of being brought out of it. He is also enabled

\* Gal. v. 22 to 26,

† Rom. xiv. 23.

enabled to discover, that he is, of himself, without righteousness, without strength, and without God in the world; and being made deeply sensible of his sin and misery, the renewed soul is helped to understand that Jesus is an all-sufficient Saviour: he is likewise inclined to hope and trust that Jesus can and will save him; and therefore, is enabled to put all his trust in him for salvation. The Redeemer is discovered to the mind of the convinced sinner, as the good physician, who can heal his maladies, and restore health and cure to him, save him to the uttermost,\* and bring him to glory. Knowing his sinful condition, the ruin he is exposed to, and that Christ only can save him, he is disposed and inclined voluntarily to chuse salvation as the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, without any thing of his own: he rejects all other confidence,† and rests only on the Saviour for acceptance with God, and eternal life. The soul who has this experience, is a person who has felt the mighty change. For all this, is in itself above the power of nature to effect; it is the produce of the divine agency. It consists in a spiritual illumination,‡ which makes these discoveries to the mind: and spiritual vivification,|| which restores the soul to heavenly life, and creates within the graces of faith, love, humility, sound repentance, and every grace and virtue necessary to constitute the new creature, and to give to the mind a heavenly meetness, a heavenly direction, and godlikeness.

It consists also, in spiritual mortification;§ by which they die to sin, and self-righteousness. The dominion of sin is taken away; and, though they are not freed from sinful infirmities, they are not the servants of sin; nor do they make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof; nor have they a proud opinion of their own goodness, for they know, that of themselves they have none. They do not say, they are as good

as

\* Heb. vii. 25. † Gal. vi. 14. & ii. 19, 20.

‡ 1. Cor. ii. 14, 15. || 1. Pet. i. 23.

§ Col. iii. 5.—Rom. vi. 2, 7.—1. Peter ii. 24.

as any of their neighbours; for they know they are by nature, as vile as the vilest; and they account themselves the chief of sinners. They glory in nothing in themselves; but Christ is their glory, their trust, and their boast; for from him they derive the whole of their salvation.

Now, that call which draws a sinner's soul from self and sin, must be an effectual call indeed; and it really is so, for it is the call of God.

Can you see your own features in this mirror, my *Civicus*?

*Civicus.* Dear Evangelista, I think I can; for if to be brought from sin and self, to trust alone in Christ for salvation, be a divine change; then I can say, I am the subject of that change. This transformation is begun in me, and I am as certain as I am of any thing, that it is a work of divine power. For, you know, I withstood the light as long as I was able, and I should have remained eternally in my delusion, had not God undeceived me. Therefore, I scruple not to say, I have felt this change; and I am sure it is a work of divine power, and to God only be the praise. I ascribe it all to divine mercy and matchless grace, as the cause; and to the Divine Spirit's energy, as the effector of the work: and, if my heart deceives me not, I desire to be saved both from sin and self, and to live a life of evangelical holiness, in faith and love. To bring forth the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. I humbly trust that grace and strength will be given me, to enable me thus to live and walk. But I see and feel that all this must come from God.

I am ready to say, that those who imbibe and teach, that men have power of their own to turn to God when they please; are propagators of a vile absurdity; and that they are not to be regarded in this. I own and assert, that men have power to use the means which God has appointed to bring those who believe to be partakers of the salvation which is in Christ: i. e. they can hear the

the word, and join in the worship of God ; they can leave off their immoral practices and evil courses : the liar can learn to speak the truth ; the drunkard can learn to be sober ; the dishonest man can learn not to do injury to his neighbour ; and the swearer can leave off his hateful oaths and curses. Every man can use the means of grace (who lives where they are granted) instead of profaning the Lord's-day. These things men can do, and to such as wait at wisdom's gates,\* eternal mercy promises to bless them.

But renovation is a supernatural work, which none but God can effect. All this I see and feel, as certainly as any thing in existence ; and therefore, I assert it, as a known and tried fact, that real conversion is essential to salvation ; and, that it is wrought by divine and invincible grace ; and my heart feels the most powerful acquiescence with this essential truth.

*Evan.* Your answer and observations yield me great pleasure and satisfaction ; I perceive by it an exemplification of the words of the wise man, for he says, the path of the just (or the justified) is as the shining light.† You were first enlightened to see your sin and danger, and were alarmed at your state ; you were then laid low in self-abasement ; stripped of all your supposed goodness ; brought naked, poor, and helpless to the Saviour ; and made willing to be saved freely and fully by him. At length you were enabled to perceive hope of your salvation, to put your trust in him, and you have found consolation. By a constant attendance on the means of grace, your views of the way of salvation have increased ; and now your soul has been felicitated with the assurance of your being renewed by grace ; and, seeing your calling, you may know your election of God.‡ Thus are you brought forth to behold the day-light of special favor. Now you have the best comment on the words before quoted :

‡ Prov. ix 5, 6.—Isa. xl. 31.

† Prov. iv. 18.

‡ II. Peter i. 10.



quoted: i. e. your own experience of their fulfilment. You have been led to embrace this glorious truth, and this will have a salutary tendency to stay your mind on the Lord, and to settle you firm in the faith, against all the blasts of error which blow around you; and to quicken you in your march to the heavenly Jerusalem.

*Civiciis.* I find it has these happy effects on my mind; for by being enabled to discern the real import of this most interesting truth, I find I can the better judge of my real state, and discern the more clearly whether the work is really begun in me or no: this has a very salutary tendency. Besides, it is truly pleasant to be enabled to know the truth in this most important matter. I find it fortifies and enlivens my mind, and I feel pleasure and serenity of soul in proportion to the light I receive from a discernment of this great truth. This leads me to aim at and pray for a continual growth in every grace. I could say more, but at present adieu.

*Evan.* Dear *Civiciis*, adieu.

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## DIALOGUE VII.

*On the great Article of a Sinner's Justification.*

*CIVICUS.* I suppose, my Evangelista, I shall now be entertained with your observations on a sinner's justification.

*Evan.* Yes, my friend, that is my intention. Therefore observe, that this is a very interesting and important point in divinity. The great Luther said, that "It is the grand article on which a church stands or falls." By which I should suppose he meant, that the church which holds the pure scriptural doctrine of  
free

free justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, is a true and sound church. But, that those who hold the papistical notions of justification by works, or human merit, either partially or totally, are no true churches of Christ; but false pretenders to christianity.

Now if this was the real meaning of this great man (in the sentence quoted above) I think he was perfectly right in his judgment on this grand point. For the true church of Christ is said to be the pillar\* and ground of the truth; and the disciples of Christ hold the truth which himself and the Apostles taught in a pure conscience.† But there is no truth more clearly taught in all the gospel than this; that a man is not justified by the works of the law,‡ but by the righteousness of Christ, which is to all, and upon all those who believe,§ without any difference. Therefore, the churches of Christ, properly so called, and every individual saint in them, hold this truth in an enlightened conscience, as the eye holds the light; and no longer (pharisee and papist like) go about seeking justification as it were by the works of the law;|| but they seek it in a way of God's own appointment: i. e. in an act of special grace, which imputes to them the righteousness of Christ, and which they receive by faith alone. The soul who is thus taught and influenced, stands on the rock which will weather out, and stand against all the storms,¶ winds and floods which may be permitted to blow and beat against them. But the boasting pharisee and the papistical merit-monger, are both on the quick sands, and the floods of divine wrath, and the storms of almighty vengeance, will sweep their Babel building,\*\* and themselves with it into the depths of the dead sea, except they take another standing on the *terra firma*,†† above described.

*Civicus.*

\* I. Tim. iii. 15.    † I. Tim. iii. 9.    ‡ Gal. ii. 16.

§ Acts xiii. 38, 39.—Rom. iii. 22.    || Rom. ix. 32.

¶ Matt. vii. 25.    \*\* Matt. vii. 27.

†† The firm ground.

*Civicius.* You have taken the right method to awaken my attention, and to secure it, I can assure you; and I shall listen with critical exactness to all you may advance on the subject, for it is an important and interesting one. All we have already discussed is highly important, yet this seems to be peculiarly so; I shall, therefore, observe attentively every word you say.

*Evan.* That is the right way to understand what you hear: and it is good and pleasant to have the attention as wakeful as the importance of the subject demands, and I hope that this is your case. Therefore, I will now direct your attention to the cause of justification, the matter of it, and the instrument by which we receive it.

1. The cause of it:—This is the gracious purpose of God; so St. Paul tells the believing Romans, in chap. viii. verses 28, 29, and 30. In these verses the apostle asserts, that the saved of the Lord are predestinated to be called; saying, whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate, &c. In which words, it is very plain, that the apostle means to tell us, that it is the gracious purpose and design of God, which is the moving cause of our justification, who believe in Jesus. Indeed, the thing is self-evident; for if we are justified freely by grace, there can be no moving cause of it, but the divine will. The justification of believers, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, is the predetermination of the divine mind from everlasting. For, whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified. i. e. Every one of them whom he did predestinate, every one of them he called; and every one whom he calls, he justifies; and whom he justifies, he glorifies. But the predeterminate will of Jehovah is the grand moving cause of all this, or the great fountain from whence it flows. On this ground it is, that the same apostle tells the believing Ephesians, that they had obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (thereto) according to the purpose of him who worketh

all things after the counsel of his own will.\* Justification then, originated in the mind of Deity from everlasting. The only moving cause of it, is the good pleasure of his own will, who is the maker of all things, and by whom all things consist. So our Lord says, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.† The words of the apostle, above quoted, are exactly in point here : being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. BY GRACE ; i. e. by his mere good pleasure, as the cause, and the righteousness of Christ imputed, as the matter of the believer's justification. Which brings me to observe more particularly in the next place,

2. What the *matter* of our justification is. Here I say, it is the righteousness of Christ‡ in his active and passive obedience ; by this the law is magnified and justice satisfied, and this is to all and upon all them that believe, by divine imputation : and this is that for which God justifies all those who believe in Jesus. For Jesus, as the sinner's surety, took on himself the whole of his people's debt, and for them paid the very last mite. It was for them he fulfilled all righteousness and made an end of sin : for they, as guilty creatures, wanted not only redemption from the curse of the law, but also, a righteousness in which they could appear before God with acceptance, and be just in his sight. Now, the righteousness of Christ is that in which they stand completely accepted, and fully and freely justified and acquitted from every charge that law or justice could have brought against them ; for he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes in|| him ; for he was delivered to death for our offences, and raised from death for our justification.¶ By his obedience shall many be made righteous. i. e. every believer.

\* Eph. i. 11.    † Luke. xii. 32.    ‡ Rom. iii. 24.

§ Rom. iii. 22, 23, 26.    || Rom. x. 4.

¶ Rom. iv. 25—v. 19.

fore-know, he also did predestinate. If we take these words as they are, without twisting them to serve a turn they were never designed to serve, we shall see clearly enough, that they teach the doctrine which I have advanced, and shew it to be sound and good: that none can be justified who believe not; for our Lord says, he that believeth *not*, the wrath of God abideth on him. But a state of pardon and justification, and a state of condemnation and wrath, are two such opposites, that I should think no man in his senses would assert, that they are true of one and the same person at the same time. Then the following is the truth: the people of God are actually justified when they truly believe; but their believing is no uncertain contingency, or fortuitous event which may, or may not happen, but a fulfilment of the divine purpose, which had from eternity secured the fact. Therefore I assert, that the divine will is the moving cause, and the righteousness of Christ the matter of our justification; and faith is the hand or instrument that receives it; or, it is the hand that lays hold on the Saviour's righteousness, assenting to it as that with which God is well pleased, and in which the soul sees it can stand with acceptance before him, and in which it confides for justification.

The mind of the believer is enabled to see that this is the only way in which infinite wisdom sees good to acquit sinners of their guilt, and receive them to favor: and being convinced that this is the way of God's chusing; the believer is enabled to chuse it also, and yield the most unfeigned assent and consent to it, as an absolute fact to be relied on for eternity, that the righteousness of Christ, by divine imputation, is to all,\* and upon all them who believe, for their complete justification.

Being persuaded, that all those who thus believe in the Saviour, are actually pardoned, justified, and accepted of God; the believer is enabled to put in his own individual claim, and to trust that he also is for  
Christ's

\* Rom. iii. 22.—I. Cor. i. 30—Rom. iv. 25.

Christ's sake fully acquitted from every charge that the holy law and pure justice of the Deity might have charged on him as criminal. Therefore, he flees to the Saviour, and lays hold on his righteousness, as it is held forth in the gospel; and finds that the Saviour receives him, and that the divine Father acquits him of every charge whatever; and the Holy Spirit shews him, that, as a believer in Christ, there is now no condemnation to him\*, nor any in future. But this discovery is made to true faith only. It is this discovery of the Saviour to the believing soul, that enables faith to remove the mountains of guilt and fear, and brings into the mind an evidence of divine acceptance and free pardon, as well as a discharge from a sense of all guilt. It is faith that apprehends† and understands the Father's imputation of the Son's righteousness, and believes that the man himself is constituted just in the eyes of him who justifies freely, even Jehovah himself.

Thus is the renewed soul persuaded and enabled to embrace the righteousness of Christ by faith, in which he is constituted just; and actually brought into a state of peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and this fills the soul with consolation and joy. But this discovery never was, nor ever will be made to a sinner in unbelief. True, justification is one thing, and the discovery of it to the soul, is another; but every justified sinner has a measure of this discovery, sufficient to enable the mind at least to hope for acceptance through Christ. For, being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.‡ It is, therefore, impossible to be justified in unbelief.

But while I assert this, let us remember, that there is an inseparable connection betwixt predestination to life everlasting, calling by grace, justification, and glorification: and that the first, infallibly secures all the

\* Rom. viii. 1.    † Rom. i. 17.    ‡ Rom. v. 1.

the rest : and though faith is the hand which receives justification, yet it is not faith which justifies the soul, but the righteousness of Christ imputed, on which faith depends. The office of faith is (under divine influence) to bring into the mind of the believer, the actual enjoyment of a justified state, and the comforts thereof. But, we are not to suppose that faith constitutes our justifying righteousness; but that faith lays hold on the Redeemer's righteousness, which is to all, and upon all them who *believe*, not on them who do not believe. Nor is faith the matter of our justification, but the righteousness of Christ, on which faith lays her hand.

From whence it is clearly inferable, that those who make faith our justifying righteousness, are in an egregious error; and turning faith to a purpose for which it is not calculated, nor designed. For that which constitutes a sinner just, must be absolutely perfect and pure, as well as everlasting. But the believer finds, even after grace received, that there are doubts which frequently arise in the mind, and often of a very distressing nature. Therefore, this faith cannot be that everlasting righteousness which constitutes him just before God : for then, impurity and sin must pass for absolute purity and perfection, which is absolutely impossible. But the righteousness which justifies the soul of the believer, is spotlessly perfect, pure, and everlasting. In this, the believer is complete, and stands with acceptance before God, clothed in that pure robe; and the Divine Majesty looks upon him with as much complacency as the purest angels in glory. Yea, the righteousness which justifies the believer, is more dignifying than theirs, for that is only the righteousness of creatures, but the righteousness of the saints, is the righteousness of God.

Now, what think you, on this grand and important subject?

*Civicius.* I think it is important indeed; and I conceive of it as a fundamental doctrine, and therefore of the highest consequence. In my mind I have compared

pared it thus : Suppose a man in the highest affluence, sinks in the world, and becomes insolvent ; he owes prodigious sums and is not able to pay a farthing ; he is prosecuted and committed to prison, and must remain there till he perishes, or pays all his debts : the unhappy man is seized and sinks in despair, knowing he has nought to pay ; but a kind friend, able and willing, voluntarily undertakes to mediate for him, and pay all his debts ; he makes his proposals to the creditor, and they are accepted : he pays the money to the last farthing ; the bills are all cancelled, and the poor imprisoned debtor is set free, as if he had paid all himself : for his friend's payment is placed to his account, and the creditor fully satisfied. The law allows the transaction and the prisoner is set free : he also having joyfully accepted the kindness with unfeigned gratitude, is now as free from any claim from his creditor as if he had never been indebted to him. I conceive, I say, that there is a similarity here, to what Jesus does to his believing people.—But if the debtor had stubbornly refused to accept this kindness, and would not consent to the transfer, he must have remained in prison till he could pay his debt himself, or perish.—Those who believe not in Christ, consent not to be saved by him, and in that state they cannot be justified.

This may rebuke the error of those who teach that men are justified before believing, on the one hand ; and those who make faith our justifying righteousness, on the other. For, if faith be the hand that lays hold on the Redeemer's righteousness, we cannot take that hold without the hand of faith. Again, faith itself cannot justify, any more than the man's consent could pay his debt. It was not his consent which paid the creditor but his friend's money ; so, it is not faith, but the Redeemer's righteousness which justifies the believing soul. This may rebuke supralapsarian rigidity on the one hand, and arminian free will on the other. For the real truth lies between these two extremes, as it appears to me.

*Even.* Your illustration is quite apropos, and I am



much pleased with your observations; and I trust it is a proof that you are increasing in divine knowledge; this is a very great blessing, may you increase in the enjoyment of it more and more. But be it remembered by us, that after all the discoveries we can make, we know (comparatively) nothing of what may be known of God, in his word and by his works both of providence and grace. But it is a proof that we increase in saving knowledge, when our new discoveries make us more in earnest to make greater advances, and not to take up with the proud opinion that we know enough already, and that none can teach us better. May you and I be ever kept from this *pharisaic delusion*, and be still hungering and thirsting to know more and more of God till we enjoy him fully above.

*Civicus.* Amen; that is my desire.—I think our next contemplation is to be on divine adoption; I should like to be entertained with it now, if you please.

*Evan.* I should like it as well as you, but I think propriety demands that we defer it till our next interview; therefore, excuse me for the present. Dear *Civicus*, farewell.

*Civicus.* Dear *Evangelista*, farewell.

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## DIALOGUE VIII.

### On ADOPTION.

**E***EVANGELISTA.* Dear *Civicus*, we are now to contemplate the most interesting and important doctrine of adoption. This, as to its actual fulfilment, is consequent on calling and justification. Divine adoption is a taking of awakened sinners, whom  
sovereign

sovereign grace had chosen to life from among the ruined family of fallen Adam, and putting them into the family of heaven ;\* a numbering them with the renovated and heaven-born children of God ; a making them heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus;† a separating them from their old stock Adam, and an engrafting them into Christ the living vine. For in consequence of their election union to Christ in eternity, they are in due time vitally united to him by faith and love : and being so, they are no longer under the dominion of sin and the curse of the law ; for being redeemed by blood divine, and called by heavenly grace, the dominion of sin is slain, the curse of the law removed, and the spirit of bondage to guilty fear is taken away by a manifestation of their adoption to their souls by the Holy Spirit : thus they are brought into a happy degree of gospel liberty, and the comfortable sense of their interest in adopting grace ; are now no longer reckoned strangers, foreigners, and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God ;‡ not of the unconverted, who are dead in trespasses and sins, but of the number of the called according to the divine purpose, and set apart for God, as branches of his own renovated family. Now, are they, as heirs of God, made kings and priests unto him, and enabled to put off the image of the first Adam, and put on that of the second, even the Lord from heaven ; and as they have borne the image of the earthly, now do they bear the image of the heavenly ;§ and Christ seals on their spirits|| by his own, an abiding sense of their adoption ; and makes them see that he is their living head, and they the members of his mystical body : this is the sacred relation they stand in to him, and he forms it himself, makes it known to them, and lets them know he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Thus are they numbered with the children of God,  
and

\* Gal. iv. 5, 6.—John i. 12.—Eph. i. 5.

† Rom. viii. 17.

‡ Eph. ii. 19.

§ I. Cor. xv. 49.

|| Eph. i. 13.

strongest; and though some of them, through the remains of unbelief and sinful doubt, do not enjoy the comforts of it; yet, the blessing is theirs; and they have a gratuitous right to enjoy it; and they ought to know, that this holy doctrine is calculated to comfort their souls, and fill them with a sweet and abiding sense of their interest in eternal love, and of their being partakers of all the blessings of the great redemption. To know this, is to have a begun heaven; and a rich foretaste of eternal glory.

Now, if my friend has this witness within, surely he can sing with me the following appropriate

#### H Y M N.

1. THE Vessels of grace,  
Are chosen to life,  
From Adam's lost race.  
And sav'd from their strife  
Against their Creator;  
And turn'd from their sin,  
They feel a new nature  
Implanted within.
2. Created anew,  
By grace rich and free;  
They're then led to view  
Their interest in thee,  
Thou mighty Redeemer,  
Whose heav'nly light,  
Shines in the believer,  
And sets his soul right.
3. Thy Spirit sent home  
Thy word with such power,  
As made him to come  
To thee, the same hour;  
And own his deception  
With sorrow and shame,  
Then thou his adoption  
Didst inly proclaim.

4. This act of rich grace,  
I gladly now see,  
And feel it at last  
Is acted on me ;  
Drawn now by consenting  
(Dear Lord I am thine)  
With humble repenting,  
And faith that's divine !
5. I now see my guilt  
Is all done away ;  
This witness I've felt,  
And sing it with joy ;  
I see my adoption  
So strikingly clear ;  
Surpassing conception  
My pleasures now are.
6. The son of the King,  
I see that I am,  
And he will soon bring  
My soul to that clime,  
Where pleasures supernal,  
Unmix'd are enjoy'd ;  
The bliss is eternal,  
And can't be annoy'd.

*Civiciis.* Well, my Evangelista, of all the sacred songs you have yet given me, this suits me the best ; this describes my feelings so exactly and pertinently, that it has yielded me the most refined pleasure. I can adopt this language as my own ; it is this which makes it so truly pleasant and delightful. I conceive this sweet and heavenly subject will afford to the saints matter for an eternal song.

*Evan.* That the matter of all our praises should be adapted to our feelings and views, is to me a self-evident truth ; for it is this, I conceive, that has the greatest tendency to make our devotion what it ought to be : i. e. lively and animating. I know you, that you are rather of a lively turn, and being willing to

P

oblige

3. The doctrine of falling from grace makes the purpose of salvation a changeable and variable thing; and consequently, the salvation of any one is a mere fortuitous event, and altogether uncertain, both to saints and sinners. For if God is not in *one mind* about the salvation of believers, he may will their salvation to-day and alter his mind to-morrow: and if so, then he is a changeable being, and the salvation of any is at best but a very doubtful and uncertain matter. Besides,

4. If the doctrine of falling from grace were true, then Christ died at *hap-hazard*: for it is not certain that he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; so far from it, there is not so much as a *may-be* for it; or if so, but at best a mere *may-be*, that some of the fallen race of Adam may be saved through the merits of Christ's death and sufferings and their own meritorious *free will*. For if the salvation of all be not wholly of grace,\* then it must be partly of the will of man; and then, salvation is of him that willeth and of him who runneth, and not wholly of him who sheweth mercy; but partly of him who sheweth mercy, and partly of him who has some merit. But this contradicts the whole gospel.

5. Therefore if salvation is at all in any sense whatever of human merit, then, that salvation is not of grace but of debt. But this gives the lie both to the old testament and the new. The doctrine of falling from grace then, is a *palpable falsehood*, absolutely unworthy the christian assent and the christian character, and as such, let us reject it: and if I know my own feelings, from the bottom of my soul (if I may so speak) I do so reject it. Same time I have nothing to do with the state of the souls of many who believe that doctrine, except in the exercise of christian charity to hope that they may be right in the main notwithstanding. It is the odious doctrine I contend against, and not the state of their souls before God. But,

6. H

6. If any one of the purchased by redeeming blood, and called by divine grace, may nevertheless fall away and perish, then it follows, they all may do so, and of consequence, the atonement of Christ be of no value whatever, but his death be altogether in vain. But who that is willing to listen to common sense, can suppose for a moment that Christ would undertake to suffer and die to *no purpose*, or an *uncertain and doubtful one at best*. No, a God of *infinite wisdom* cannot act so *unwisely*. But,

7. If any one of the called by grace can fall away and perish after being thus called, then, Christ has not redeemed them from the curse of the law, for they fall under it and perish by it. But redemption and condemnation are two extremes in opposition, and where the former reigns, the latter must be annihilated. It is evident then, that the doctrine of falling from grace, makes redemption a *non-entity*; and contradicts the plainest declarations in the Bible. St. Paul says; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.\** Consequently the law can curse *no* believer *any more*; nor any renewed soul become a *cast-away*. But in the next place,

8. If any believer fall from grace and perish, then a great part of the scriptures mean nothing, or worse than that, they tell us what is not a fact; for they say as plain as any words can make a thing, that the covenant of grace is an *everlasting covenant*,† as firm as the days of heaven: and that those who are interested therein, shall not be dis-inherited.—*Yea, even though they break God's statutes and keep not his commandments*; i. e. not so perfectly and perseveringly as they ought. *Yet, nevertheless, the Lord will not take his loving kindness from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail*:—that *Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation*:—our Lord says, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*:—and Job says, *The righteous shall hold on his way,‡ and he who has clean bands*

\* Gal. iii 13. † Psa. lxxxix 28, 34, 35, 36.

‡ Job. xvii. 9.—Isa. xxxv. 10.

these never took one single step in the way to heaven, and therefore, such cannot be said to be backsliders, but absolute hypocrites, and persons dead in trespasses and sins. But a backslider in a spiritual sense, is one who after having been soundly converted to Christ, and savingly renewed by the Holy Ghost, has unhappily given way to some temptation or other, which has been too strong for him, and actually fallen into some known sin;\* this brings guilt on the conscience, fear into the soul, and shame covers the face of this poor creature. He is now unable to keep up as before, that constant and persevering attendance on the means of grace he was wont to do. The consequence is, for a while he declines both in heart and life, and perhaps falls into some grievous sin. Then the tempter tells him 'tis all over now, he is gone beyond the reach of mercy, and therefore he may as well go on and take all the pleasure he can in the ways of sin, for he shall never have any other, nor obtain pardon for his grievous offences against light and knowledge; he has trampled the blood of Christ under his polluted feet, and put him to an open shame, and now he must never expect to be restored to repentance, but fall under the sorest vengeance of the Almighty. This drives him still further from God, but he can find no rest to his soul, but is like *Noah's Dove* out of the Ark, which found no rest till she returned thither; or, like a fish thrown on the land, quite out of his element in a tormenting situation, having no rest nor any hope, and knows not what to do. This is, in my opinion, properly speaking a *Backslider*: and of such an one, I will boldly say, *There is hope in Israel respecting him, notwithstanding this thing.*

But there is very often a backsliding in heart when the life is tolerably decent; a cooling of affection and zeal, a backwardness and inaptitude to spiritual exercises, and particularly to private prayer, and a cherishing of secret sin, and a too great conformity to a fashionable profession, and the conduct of mere worldly

\* Matt. xxv. 2, 5.—xxvi. 70, 74.

worldly professors. This is equally odious and detestable in the eye of divine purity, with that of more open and flagitious backsliding; and the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways,\* and if grace prevent not, be found awfully faulty. But if the former or the latter, is sensible of the evil of his ways, and deplores his sad situation, he need not despair, for the arms of divine mercy are ever ready to embrace him.

For the feeling of extreme pain and uneasiness is a proof that a man is not dead; and a healthy, sound, and strong man may fall and break his bones and bruise himself besides, but so long as he feels his situation and deplores his case, it is evident that natural life is not extinct, though the man is in extreme pain and danger, yet while life remains there is hope. Just such is the case of the repenting backslider: he has fallen and awfully bruised himself, his confidence in the Lord is broken, the hope of his soul is so weak that it is almost extinct, and he is filled with the bitterest anguish. But feeling proves him to be alive, though all his spiritual powers are extremely maimed and debilitated. But let such a soul take courage, for the great and good Physician can and will cure him, for he has a healing medicine for every malady, and a salve for every sore. His tender and gracious heart pities the poor wretch's condition, and will heal all his wounds. Hear his language, ye backsliding souls, what does he say? *Return ye backsliding children unto me, for I am married unto you, saith the Lord:† I will heal your backslidings and love you freely, for I hate putting away.* This proves that he will not forget his covenant nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor blot the name of such a poor wanderer from the book of life.

Let every mourning backslider observe this, and take encouragement to return to the Lord, and let them know they shall find a hearty welcome, for Jesus will

\* Pro. xiv. 14.

† Jer. iii. 14.



his might ; and not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good ; and to wax valient in fight, turning to fight the armies of the aliens.\*

*Civicus.* I see the propriety of your remarks, and feel the force of them on my mind ; and am convinced that it is an important truth, that the best proof of perseverance is to be found persevering in the ways of God, and daily growing in every grace. However, 'tis very good to know where one's strength lies, and to be enabled to discern on what ground we stand.

Have you any other word of advice to offer on this head ?

*Evan.* A word or two, and I have done for the present ; and it is a word of advice to you :—You are, you know, but a young disciple, lately set out in the way to glory, and you have a false and treacherous heart, and have much need to be on your guard, particularly against a worldly spirit, worldly maxims, and latent lusts. Evils without and worst within, but both very dangerous foes ; and should you give way to them, your profession may become modish and easy ; but remember when it becomes a profession *a la mode*†, it is a proof that such live far from God. But that is sad living indeed. And assure yourself, you will meet with the attacks of all these, but if you are enabled to watch and pray, you will be kept from being overcome by temptation. But if you at any time parly with sin, and yield a little to temptation, the devil will renew the onset with redoubled vigour, and a million to one but he trips you up, and gives you a dreadful fall. Therefore, remember our Lord's caution : *What I say unto you, I say unto all WATCH.*‡

*Civicus.* I see the importance and feel the kindness of this advice.—May the Lord be graciously pleased to make and keep me watchful, prayerful, and circumspect.

Have you any other observation of this sort to make ?

*Evan.*

\* Heb. xi. 34.

† A fashionable profession.

‡ Mark xiii. 37.

*Evan.* Not at present; but if you have any other question to propose, do it now.

*Civicus.* What can we say of those persons who profess for a while, perhaps for many years, and *seem* to be chief in the Church of God, both for *piety, gifts, and zeal*, and of whom on that account every body thought well; but bye and bye they are offended at something or other, and away they go, and we hear no more of them: and of others, who go on in a profession till detected by their crimes, while they carry on their profession.

*Evan.* What can we say of them? Why what the apostle John has said already: they went out from us, because they were not of us;\* had they been of us, *no doubt* they would have continued with us; but they went out from us for this purpose, that they may be manifested that they were not of us. As our Lord says to the pharisees; *Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.*† In the former instance, it is clear that those who go out from us and never return, have done as Judas did, *joined themselves* to the Church of God, and had only so much religion as mere nature could acquire, and no more; and therefore, they are carried away by their own corrupt bias and satan's temptations; for nature cannot effect a saving change, and nothing but divine power and grace can preserve from apostacy. As for those who profess till their crimes are detected, they are absolute hypocrites; and if they never repent they will sink lower in hell than the sinner's of Sodom,‡ of Tyre, and Sidon, and the darkest of the heathen. But neither the former nor the latter could fall from grace which they never had, nor go out of that way they never were in. A man may profess to have grace, and to believe the doctrines of grace, when he has not been renewed in the spirit of his mind by the divine Spirit; and from this profession he may fall, and he certainly will do so sooner or later, except it please the Lord to renew his soul by heavenly grace.

\* I. John ii. 19.

† John x. 26.

‡ Matt. xi. 2 to 24.

grace. But the acquirements of nature, and renovation by grace, are two very distinct things : and the child of nature cannot be in a state of grace ; and consequently, could not lose what he did not possess.

A man may have a traditional religion, and a natural perception of the doctrines of religion ; and may have, moreover, an attachment to the mode of his sect, and the doctrines they espouse ; without his heart being renewed. But his falling from this is not a falling from the possession of real grace, but from a semblance of it. The words of the apostle to the Galatians,\* Hebrews,† and other places, which speak of falling away, are to be understood in this light, when they are so understood, we conceive rightly of this important matter.

*Civiciis.* You appear to have reason and truth on your side, and therefore I cheerfully acquiesce in it. I perceive now, that nature may be polished without being sanctified,‡ and then no wonder that such professors turn away sooner or later. It is the child of God only to whom eternal life is given, and it is grace only which completes what it begins, and so brings the partakers of it through all to glory at last. May this felicity be mine, and my friend's also, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

*Evan.* Amen ! May we share in this mercy largely now, and at last shine in glory with all the blood bought throng, for Jesus' sake.

But before we part I wish to observe, that the native influence and tendency of these sacred principles on the hearts and lives of all those who understand them, and cordially receive them is,

1. That they are productive of sincere and supreme love to God : § for in these holy truths the divine character is held forth to us as supremely and infinitely lovely. His nature is infinitely pure and spotless ; and his conduct infinitely wise, holy, just, and good. Yea, God is Love, and in his love and his mercy he has

\* Gal. v. 4. † Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. ‡ 11. Peter ii. 20, to 22.  
§ John, xxi. 17.

has chosen to save us; and his love\* attracts the believing soul to love him in return. Divine love begets and increases the believer's love. Yea, the discovery of divine love to the believing soul, is the moving cause† of the believer's love. For, the discovery which the Lord makes to him is, that he hath loved him with a free and eternal love, merely because it was his own good pleasure so to do, and for, no other cause or reason: this secures and preserves the believer's love to his loving and gracious God. This love makes his chearful feet run delightfully in the way of the divine precepts. Now the divine commands are not grievous but delightful, and the soul pants after greater alacrity and enlargement in the ways of God, and cannot rest in any present attainments, nor till he is made perfect in holiness, and set down at the right-hand of God in heaven. The whole soul of the believer is divinely attracted by this love, to love God supremely and sincerely, and to aim constantly and continually at a growing conformity to the divine image in knowledge, faith, love, and true holiness, and short of it the believer will not rest. But in the next place,

2. Another blessed effect of these divine truths on the soul of the believer, is sincere good will to all his fellow men,‡ without exception, and especially to his fellow disciples. These divine principles inspire the believing mind with the generous belief, that all men are the creatures of the same God,§ made by the same divine power, and descended from the same original human parent, and are naturally brethren of the same family, and equally entitled to his regard and esteem, as men: but it is lawful and right that he should have a special regard|| for all his fellow disciples in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: and this peculiar regard for his christian brethren every believer has and cherishes; and by these principles his life and actions

\* I. John iv. 19.

† Gal. v. 5, 22—Eph. i. 10—Pf. cvi. 1.

‡ I. John iv. 7, 8.—Luke ii. 14. & vi. 31 to 38.

§ Acts xvii. 20.

|| Gal. vi. 10.

actions are guided. For there is this one grand rule which our Lord has taught us, by which all his disciples are influenced; viz, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.\** Therefore, every true believer is conscientiously, and studiously concerned to act by this rule; for Jesus says, if ye love me keep my commandments;† and the love of Christ constrains him to be observant of all that Jesus has commanded. Consequently, he is a man of sound piety towards God, and genuine good will to all men in general, and especially christian men. The happiness of his fellow men adds pleasure to his own; and the joy of his brethren in Christ adds bliss to his joy, he rejoices with those who do rejoice, and mourns with those who weep. This is the fruit of redeeming love brought home to the soul, and it is this which makes him the most generous being on earth, as well as the most compassionate: and he is sweetly impelled to this by his own gracious feelings. For, as the elect of God,‡ holy and beloved, he has been enabled to have bowels of mercies, and these are tenderly touched with the most generous feelings; and this is ever his godlike sentiment, to do whatever he can to *lessen* the *miseries* of men, and to *increase* their comforts, not by *complying* with their *vices*, or *conniving* at them, but by generous and manly efforts to meliorate their mental and moral condition, as well as by alleviating their temporal distress. Thus men, as men, are the objects of his general regard and good will, but the saints are the objects of his peculiar love and esteem. But in the next place.

8. These are doctrines according to godliness, and not, as some in their blind zeal for supposed holiness have represented them, the doctrines of licentiousness. No! They lead to the most exalted piety and the purest benevolence. Therefore, if a real christian has property, he will employ it for God, to do good

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\* Matt. vii. 12. & xxii. 39.  
‡ Col. iii. 12.

† John xiv. 15. & xv. 14.

to his fellow men; he will procure wholesome instruction for those who are ignorant, and relief for those who are in distress. If he has talents of a spiritual kind, these he will employ as providence calls, for the same benevolent purpose, even to shew men the way to life and peace; and if he has it in his power to encourage others to the same benevolent undertaking, he will readily do it. The minds of men he esteems of the greatest importance by inconceivable degrees, and for their welfare he is principally concerned. Therefore, the propagation of the blessed gospel as extensively as possible, is the chief of his wishes on earth, and his chief studies are directed to this grand object; for he knows well, that human felicity is consequent on its spread,\* and that for want of it the people perish.† Therefore,

4. Not only the profane and ungodly are precluded a right to the Christian name, but likewise all worldly professors, and *idle droning PARSONS*, who are neither studious nor active for the propagation of the gospel, nor the good of mankind, but are mere religious *money getters*,‡ *self seekers*, and *world pleasers*; these are not influenced by divine truth, nor conformed to Christ Jesus, but to themselves and the world; and these belong not to the Church of God, and have no saving acquaintance with the Church's Head. Therefore, except they be born again§ of the Divine Spirit, they must remain among the congregation of the dead: || or, which is the same, among *infidels* and *beatbens*, for they are not of the communion of the saints, and dying so, they must dwell with them for ever in hell. But,

5. Those who profess to believe these divine principles, but are *lovers of sin*, and live in the commission of it, *are not Christians* but *Hypocrites*,¶ and in that state *cannot be saved*. But this is not meant to throw discouragement in the way of any repenting sinner, or  
any

\* Eze. xlvii. 9 — Rev. xxii. 1, 2 — Psalm xvi. 4.

† Prov. xxix. 19 — Amos viii. 11. ‡ Isa. lvi. 10, 11.

Eze. xxxiv. 2, 3. § John iii. 5. || Pro. xxi. 16.

¶ Matt. vii. 5. — Isa. lviii. 2. compared with Chap. lix. 2, 3.

*Evan.* True, my friend, this ought to be lamented, but let us remember we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ;\* and we are told, you know, we are complete in him. I will acknowledge I have felt myself the strong workings of latent corruptions to be more powerful than any gracious feeling I ever had, as I thought, and many and many a time too ; but I don't think this is actually the case, for if it were, what would have been become of us before now. If grace had not been felt stronger than sin, the weaker must have been absolutely overcome by the stronger, and we have been carried away by it into all wickedness as before. I dare say you perceive this

*Civicus.* You have reason on your side, my *Evangelista*, and I feel comforted at the thought ; and am very thankful for the benefit of this conversation.

*Evan.* I feel like pleasure and satisfaction. Let us now sing the following verse and part for the present.

'Tis sweet to converse  
On subjects divine,  
When from the great Source;  
Its beams on us shine,  
To make conversation  
Enliv'ning and clear ;  
It brings our salvation  
(To feeling) more near.

*Evan.* Dear Civicus, adieu.

*Civicus.* Dear Evangelista, farewell.



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THOUGHTS  
ON THE  
MILLENNIUM,  
OR  
*Latter Day's Glory of the true Christian Church.*

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REV. xvi. 6.

*And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the Earth, and to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People.\**

THAT there is a very glorious period of gospel light and prosperity, and of its universal spread and triumph, yet to come, is taught as clearly in the scriptures of truth as any other important doctrine therein contained; and among others, in the text and context now before us. True, the ministers of Jesus are commissioned by him to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and many of the lively and zealous minded of the Redeemer's ambassadors have made very extensive and laudable attempts; and by their labours the Lord has wrought much good in the earth; not only in the apostolic age, but since likewise. But I conceive that all that has yet been done, is but as the twilight of the rising morning, compared with the meridian brightness of the clear noon-day. For, this *flying angel* which the apostle saw, is a seraphic gospel minister, or a succession of such, remarkably and extraordinarily raised up, qualified, and sent forth by the Lord himself, to preach

\* Compare Chap. xi. 15 to 17, with Dan. vii. 26, 27, and Chap. xx. ii. to 7.



preach to ~~all people on earth~~, after the pouring out the vials on the antichristian synagogue, and her supporters. That is, after God has ~~shaken~~ down every separating wall and every injurious fence that hindered the progress of the preached gospel. But this has never yet been done, though I am persuaded that God is now doing it, and it is very likely, that these seraphic ministers will speedily receive this enlarged commission, and go forth with the celerity of angelic minds, to preach to all the inhabitants of the earth, the everlasting Gospel of God our Saviour.

Divine veracity has pledged itself for the full accomplishment of this, and this gospel shall be preached to *every nation, kindred, and tongue*, its sound shall be heard through all the earth, and the greatest number of men shall feel its saving energy and life-giving power; for the Lord of Hosts has spoken it. Therefore to call it in question is a species of scepticism which every Christian should detest. Has God spoken it, and shall he not fulfil his word? Is any thing too hard for him? Will not his power perform what his truth has promised? Most assuredly it will. Then I would guard against scepticism on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other; for if *enthusiasm* has infected some, I am afraid *scepticism* has poisoned more. Laying aside every imaginary conceit, I would take scripture for my guide; and in devout and pleasing contemplation I would realize the long desired arrival of the blessed and important period, when the sound of the gospel shall be heard through all the earth, and all flesh see the salvation of our God. This, I am sure, is no uncertain event, for the King of Glory has appointed that it shall actually take place in its proper season, in the time best suited to manifest his infinite wisdom, and enhance his goodness, and to secure to himself the whole revenue of praise.

True, the doctrine of the Millennium has been variously and contradictorily taught, and as variously believed. On this account many have doubted it, and others have rejected it altogether. But surely the well informed christian is wiser, for he knows there is not

not a doctrine in the scripture which has not been disputed by many and rejected by others. Will any one say, that because of this the scripture is *left true*, or any one of its doctrines *less important*? I am sure no christian will, whatever others do. The disputes of men of corrupt minds, cannot invalidate or alter any iota of revealed truth. This observation will appositely apply here, and the scripture account of the Millennium be found a reality which cannot be shaken, let whosoever will dispute it: and the wilful rejecters of it, may many of them find it true to their cost; for should their unbelief foster any opposition to the work of God when he is bringing it forward, they will be dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel. For the day that shall usher in this most glorious æra will burn as an oven, and the wicked be as dry stubble before an all-devouring fire. These then, shall find it true to their sorrow, except they repent. But the children of God who have understood and believed it, will have to rejoice and be glad at its arrival: for now Jesus will take to himself his mighty power, and subdue the nations to his government and reign over all, for he is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*; and now he will send forth his word by his servants to every land. Those who welcome the glad tidings to their hearts will live for ever; but those who oppose and rebel will be destroyed. The Kingdom of Christ must come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven; or else, he has taught, and they have learnt to pray in vain; and all faith in it would be equally vain. But this cannot be, for he is the little Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and his Church, who are the members of his body, shall soon become a great mountain and fill the *whole earth*, both with her *doctrine*, *disciples*, *worship*, and *discipline*; for of these is his evangelical Kingdom composed. Therefore, our Lord will first make way for his evangelists to pass, and then he will send them from land to land. The hindrances, whether men or things, he will soon first remove by the pouring out of the vials of divine wrath, which this context predicts;

and these shall throw down and overturn whatever stands in his way; though to human power insurmountable, yet to his own it shall instantly give way, as soon as he shall see good to exert it.

These hindrances are stupid idolatrous Gentilism, on the one hand, and Antichristian delusions and practices, on the other. These are so deeply rooted in the minds of their deluded votaries, that nothing but the power of the Almighty, can pull up the one, or throw down the other: but till this is done there is not the least human probability that the gospel will spread, or men be enlightened, or the Kingdom of Christ come in that manner which the divine word has informed us it shall. Therefore, the judgments of the great God, as described in this chapter, will beat down and tear up the powers which support these abominations, and take them out of the way. Then those seraphic minds described by the appellation of *angels*, shall go forth preaching salvation to dying men of every nation, tribe and tongue. The power of the Lord will furnish them for their work, and wonderfully crown their messages with vastly superior success, than any thing that has yet been known. The energy of the Divine Spirit will prepare the people, and make them ready to receive the word of the Lord; and though they will be but as the *Valley of dry Bones*, yet by the words of the angelic prophets being accompanied with divine energy, they will come together bone to its bone, and stand up a living army, and an innumerable company. For the word these ministers shall deliver will be made effectual for these purposes, and to accomplish all things for which it is sent. These are to enlighten and evangelize *the great mass of mankind*, and to turn them from darkness to light, from sin and Satan to Christ, and to bring them by him to eternal felicity. For we are not taught to conceive of the redeemed of the Lord as a small inconsiderable number, considered in the aggregate,\* nor that the disciples of Jesus on earth will always be in the minority. No, for the angel in  
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\* Or, total sum.

the words before us has a commission to preach the gospel to every nation, and to all men; and his success will be as *large as his commission*.

Perhaps this angel may signify either some such remarkable individuals as a LUTHER, a CALVIN, or a WHITFIELD, or a succession of such; only with this difference, these will be armed with a greater degree of divine furniture and ardor, and crowned with more abundant success than those. For though they all carry the same message to their fellow men, yet the qualification for the work, and the measure of success which each minister shall have, depends on the divine will; and the work is effected by the energy of the Holy Ghost.

But the Lord's people are scattered all over the earth, especially in the Millennial age: therefore all over the earth shall the gospel be preached in purity and power; and the great majority in every land shall hear its sound and feel its influence, and thereby be brought to know the Saviour and the way of salvation by him, and enjoy a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. But if the gospel were not to be sent to them, we know of no other way whereby to make them wise to salvation; for the apostle says, *faith cometh by hearing*, and hearing the gospel preached faithfully to them: that is doubtless his meaning. Consequently, this is another reason of a very conclusive nature why the gospel sound must be heard through all the earth, and the messengers of the Lord be sent from land to land, and be crowned with all conceivable success. For now, in this happy period, the King of Sion will ride forth in his evangelic car, conquering and to conquer. Now too, the arrows of divine conviction shall stick fast in the hearts of the King's enemies, and make them fall before him, and become his humble suppliants, his willing disciples, and his most affectionate friends. He bids his prophet tell us, that he intends to make them the most *delicious, soul-reviving, and all-animating FEAST*; a *Feast*, the most *costly* to its *Founder*, but *absolutely free to every guest*; and he tells us too, that it shall be a feast to

*all people.* Certainly this cannot mean a *small diminutive number*, nor *every individual of Adam's race*; but in the time when it shall be prepared, it shall be the *great mass of men in every country*; a *vast number which no man can number*, from every part of the world.

I shall not notice the different sentiments which have obtained on this subject, for the sake of time and room, but directly state that which appears to my mind to be revealed in the Word of God. For while we tread on this ground we shall stand firm, for the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls has made it certain and sacred; what we derive from thence will be from a pure fountain, and then the stream will be clear also. Therefore, the Scriptures shall be our *premiere* and *derniere resort*, to these we make our first and last appeal; for from hence we may safely look for truth and certainty, and be able thereby to discern the true nature of the *Millennial Dispensation*, with its blessed effects and consequences on the minds and bodies of men, the state of the world, and the church of God. It will then be found in the largest sense, that the entrance of divine truth into the minds of men giveth light, in a very extensive manner, and of a most-salutary kind indeed. So much so, that the dullest shall be well taught, and raise their hearts and voices to their Creator's high praises, and to every thing tending to honor and glorify their Saviour, make themselves happy and spread felicity to all around.

For the further illustration of this truly delightful and pleasing subject, I would attend regularly to the following principal points:

I. The Millennium\* is a period in which pernicious sentiment and destructive practice shall be done away, both from the minds and bodies of men.

II. The approach of this happy period is to be announced to the world by pouring out the vials of divine judgments on the enemies of Christ, and the opposers of his kingdom.

\* From Mille, one thousand, and Annorum, years; it signifies a thousand years.

III. After these judgments are inflicted, it will be seen they were designed to remove worse evils, and to introduce the most glorious part of the evangetic dispensation.

IV. This will be productive of the highest felicity both spiritual and terrestrial that the church and world ever yet saw, which will shed genial rays of benign influence over all mankind.

V. The Millennium will be a period of long continuance.

*First.* The Millennium is a period in which pernicious sentiment and destructive practice shall be done away, both from the minds and bodies of men, for it is the glorious gospel jubilee, and the sabbatical year of the Lord. The mind of man in this glorious season, will be delivered from those delusions so fatal to human felicity, which the fall introduced at first, and which the prince of darkness has fostered and propagated by means of men of corrupt minds, and the destructive errors they have imbibed and practiced. For now the all-irradiating light will shine, and men be enabled thereby to discover truth and detect error; now, more than ever, the Divine Spirit's influence will be poured from on high, and the night of *Gentilism*, *Papal Superstition*, *Mahometan delusion*, and every other *anticristian sentiment* and practice will be chased before the bright shining of this most glorious light, as the shadows of the evening are before the approaching morning when the sun begins to dart his rays.

Now the minds of men as well as their bodies are subject to that bondage of corruption which their ignorance and wickedness have so abundantly brought forth. The covering vail of human ignorance is cast over the minds of natural men in all nations, and in consequence of that, they are wrapped in worse than Egyptian night. Nor is this darkening vail taken away from Christendom itself; for though there are many of the children of light in it at present, as well as formerly, yet, alas! the baneful influence of the *Le heres*, and the *Le isheres*, which ignorant party men,

men, and self-seeking priests have raised, there is too much reason to say, that the vail is not yet taken off from the visible professing christian churches to this day. But at the arrival of this glorious gospel jubilee and sabbatic year of the Lord, this vail of the covering shall be taken away, *even from off all the Earth* ; \* this is the testimony of God himself by his prophet *Isaiah*. It is certain this *glorious event* has never yet happened ; for instead of being taken off all the earth, there are comparatively few who are not yet darkened by this destructive vail. There never was a time yet, in which these words have had their accomplishment ; consequently, it is an event to be expected, and that on the surest grounds, even the divine veracity and prediction, which the faithfulness of Deity is engaged to perform.

We are likewise assured that ALL shall know the Lord, and that the Spirit's influence shall be poured on *all flesh* ; that *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea*. That Jesus shall be King of *Nations*, as well as King of saints. That the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. That he shall reign over *all the earth even for ever and ever* ; that is to the end of time : for the apostle Paul teaches us, that beyond the resurrection of the dead, Christ shall resign the reign of his mediatorial government to the Divine Father, † that he might be all in all. Therefore we may safely say, that the Millennium is an age of glorious light and heavenly influence, which shall chase the darkness of error away, with all its effects and consequences on the minds of men and the state of the world.

To the Church of Christ it will be the most welcome and most glorious period she ever knew on earth. It is worth while to observe, that the reign of ignorance and error is compared to the darkness of the night, not only for the sable hue of its shades, but for its universality and widely extended reign ; for it wraps the whole hemisphere in the darkness of its gloom,

\* Isa. xxv. 9.

† I. Cor. xv. 24, 25.

gloom, and thereby lulls all things to silence and slumbers. On the contrary, this glorious dispensation is not only called the day, but we are told it shall be a day of *seven-fold light*; and more than that, in this glorious day the bride, the Lamb's wife shall be clothed with the sun, have the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. By which the Holy Ghost signifies to us, that the pure knowledge of God, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ our Lord, shall be discerned as clearly, and known as fully as the eyes discern the objects which surround us, when the sun shines most clearly, and no clouds appear. For as the rays of the sun emit heat as well as light, and gild the creation with its glories, so the sun of righteousness not only spreads heavenly light abroad, but adorns and beautifies the mind with its various graces. This makes the happy partakers of these divine favours to understand fully what the prophets and apostles have recorded by divine direction; inasmuch that they are truly and emphatically called, the *children of light*. This furnishes them for *every good word and work*, and enables them to shine to their Saviour's praise, and to adorn the doctrine of the great Redeemer in all things: this will be general in this happy time, and in a supereminent degree. Consequently, the night of error must flee away, and the day of divine knowledge arrive, in glory more brilliant, and light more extensive, than the most glorious day that the world ever yet saw, by as much as the light of seven suns would be more brilliant than that of one only.

“ Oh! long expected day begin,

“ Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.”

It must be so, for the King of Kings undertakes to do the work, and nothing can hinder its completion, for all must bow to his scepter, or be dashed to pieces by his rod. Every soul must be subjected to his government; and every destructive practice as well as every pernicious sentiment must give way to the reign of righteousness, peace, and truth. Hurting and violence must be known no more, war and human carnage



carnage must sink to the regions of darkness from whence they sprung. For the Redeemer's maxim must become the universal law: *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.* The end of this commandment is love, out of a pure heart and friendship unfeigned. This friendship must be maintained by all our Lord's disciples, and at this time they will be the great mass of men, become his willing people. Consequently, peace, friendship, and felicity will bless all the earth, and the curse of the ground for the sin of man will be happily and proportionably removed.

All this is evidently and plainly implied in the binding of satan and casting him into the bottomless pit during the Millennium. But the binding of the hellish lion is a certain event which will infallibly take place; and it will be to *all men*, one of the most interesting and important of events: yea, it will be one of the most gracious acts of the Redeemer's power. For the grand mischief-maker, who is now the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience, will then be confined to the bottomless pit, and not suffered to go forth as now to deceive the nations, either by pernicious errors or destructive practices. The kingdom of hell must be completely overthrown, and the reign of King Jesus universally set up. God says of the whole kingdom of darkness, with its members and appurtenances, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, 'till he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.* Therefore the gentilsim papistry, and every species of antichristianity which has desolated the world and defiled the Church of Christ, must be swept away with the besom of destruction, and the old serpent be permitted no longer to prowl through the creation, seeking whom he may devour; he shall be shut up in the abyss of infernal despair. Then there will be no more hurting or destroying in all the holy mountain of our God: for then too, the whole earth shall be the temple of the Lord, and Jesus shall reign from the rivers to the ends of the earth,

earth, and all nations submit to his scepter. Satanic influence, and mental slavery shall be swept away ; and pontifical und sacerdotal domination be no more : the ministers of religion will be of the primitive order ; *Not lords over God's heritage, but helpers of his people's joy. Not teachers for filthy lucre's sake, but disinterested ministers of Jesus, who watch for souls as persons who must give account to him who shall judge the quick and dead.* For the Millennium will not put away the pure preaching of the word, nor render the gospel ministry useless. Christ has already commissioned his own ministers to go and preach to all nations ; nor has he ever revoked that commission, nor will he ever do so, for says he, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* In the words I have selected, the angel has the *everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, and tongue* ; and this angel signifies a heavenly minded minister or ministers of Jesus, who in the Millennium will go forth with angelic ardor and seraphic celerity, to deliver their messages to their fellow men. Therefore, let us guard against those enthusiasts who would set aside *all preaching*, as much as against those sceptics who call all this in question.

But the ministers of Jesus never were, nor ever will they wish to be, setters up of *lords many*, over the faith and consciences of their brethren ; nor *gods many*, to invade the divine prerogative, but they are the studious promoters of gospel knowledge in its purity and power. This will cause men to know that Jesus ONLY is *King in Zion, and head over all things to his Church* ; and they are all, without exception, *Brethren* ; and nothing above this in spiritual things ; even those whom divine influence inspires with heavenly graces and ministerial gifts, are not lords over God's heritage, but helpers of his people's joy. Even apostles themselves claimed no higher pre-eminence, well knowing that they had no right to any higher pretensions. Then it is clear, that real gospel ministers are only brethren in office, having no pre-eminence over the meanest christian in all the school of Christ ; but as  
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he may be blest with superior gifts and graces, and thereby rendered more useful to the brethren in Christ and to men in general ; and every man who is thus distinguished by these gracious qualifications has a right to be a preacher of the word, wherever and whenever providence gives him an *open door*. Yet more than that, it is right for such to seek opportunities to do good as far as they may ; and wrong for them to sleep on in a supine and negligent manner not caring whether men are saved or damned.

From all this it is natural to infer, that the sentiment which would lead men to exalt self and debate the Saviour, is in itself most pernicious and antichristian ; and those opinions which would lead men to create a pontifical or priestly lordship in the house of God ; and that would inspire the civil powers to repress and persecute those who cannot in conscience agree to such odious tenets, as well as those absurd and abominable notions that would lead carnal men to suppose that a course of human learning can give them a right to the christian ministry, for the sake of a genteel livelihood : and also, all those notions which would lead men to sin that grace may abound, or to do evil that good may come, are equally antichristian and pernicious : and all that conduct which these bad principles inspire, must be abominable to God and equally injurious to men ; and as long as these prevail, this world will continue to be a *sort of acceldama, a field of blood*, of injustice and rapine. But the Kingdom of Christ is the opposite of all this ; for it is a Kingdom of *righteousness, peace, and purity* : and this Kingdom must come, and the Redeemer's will must be done on earth as it is in heaven. Therefore, every pernicious sentiment and destructive practice must be rooted up and destroyed.

This is light which will spring up and spread abroad with every opening day ; and in it men will be enabled to see where their truest interest lies, and how they may glorify God and enjoy him. This will also, more strikingly than ever, impress every believer that the saints are all the children of the same heavenly

heavenly Father, loved by the same divine love, redeemed by the same precious blood, called by the same celestial grace, sanctified by the same Holy Spirit's influence, partakers of the same faith, and destined to the same heaven; having one and the same hope of eternal life; and this will inspire *them all* with the purest philanthropy or sincere love to each other. This will be universal, and become productive of real felicity. For these divine principles will win their way and prevail, nor shall any opposition stop their progress or hinder their march, whether terrestrial or infernal or both leagued together. Then men will compare spiritual things with spiritual, so will they discern the truth and cordially embrace it, and ~~detect~~ *error* and fly from it.

This is the native production of the reign of righteousness, which shall now prevail without control; and the Millennium will be the ævum of spiritual felicity, civil friendship, and universal peace and love. But this leads me to our next observation,

II. To shew that the approach of this happy period is to be announced to the world by pouring out the vials of divine judgments on the enemies of Christ and the opposers of his Kingdom.\* The scripture is very clear and expressive on this awful point; sweeping judgments which will punish the wicked in general and remove many of them from the earth, are to be expected; and the Christian may expect their arrival when the wicked triumph in their iniquities and think themselves most secure; for the word of truth says, *When they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh.* The judgment which *Daniel* predicts chap. vii. is evidently the judgment of antichrist in time; to make way for the Kingdom of God, and the dominion of his saints, that the gospel may spread into all the earth! and not the judgment of all men at the end of time, as some have vainly enough imagined and

\* For the proof of this, see Dan. vii. 26. 27.—Matt. xxiv. 21, to the end—Rev. chapters xvi. and xvii.

and asserted. But this judgment is the very same which St. *John* predicts shall fall on Babylon the Mother of Harlots, with all her sons and daughters; and it is designed to *tire up and cast down the Throne of antichrist*, with all her limbs and members, and every antichristian institution and practice. To rid the earth of the idolatrous and pernicious traffic with the souls and consciences of men, her abominable pollutions and murders, with all her hellish blasphemies and iniquities: the *Mother of Harlots* shall suffer the strokes of the Almighty till herself is destroyed, and her iniquities swept away. For these are so many, so abominable in their nature, so destructive in their tendency, and so extensive and universal that the earth is waxed old under her various abominations, and ready to sink beneath the dreadful pressure of their load. The whole earth travails and groans to be delivered from this intolerable burden; and in due time her renovation shall take place. This most wonderful change is so great in itself, and so mighty in its effects, that the divine word represents it by a new creation of heaven and earth. But, great as this wonderful renovation is, and notwithstanding every obstacle which earth and hell can throw in the way of its accomplishment, it SHALL take place. For, judgment will come upon the enemies of God to the uttermost; and the plagues of the Almighty be poured on the head and members of the antichristian synagogue: and there is great reason to believe her perdition is at the door. Indeed she is smitten for this same purpose, and the strokes God is now striking her with are the begun judgments which the prophet *Daniel*, and the apostle *John*, have predicted should come upon her.

Therefore, nothing can be more manifest than this, that the Millennium is to be announced to the world by the pouring out of the vials of divine wrath on the enemies of Christ and his gospel; and this makes the way for its universal spread. For it *tears up the Throne of Antichrist himself*, and *demolishes his empire*; but *sets up the Throne of EMANUEL and his SAINTS*. Then the wicked must lose their influence, and Jesus reign over  
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all, and his Church share with him in the glory of his Kingdom.

The consequence will be, that all the wicked must turn or burn : *i. e.* they must bow to his sceptre, or be broken to pieces by his rod. But God, who knows all things from eternity to eternity, gives us sufficient reason to conclude, that a vast number of the adherents to the head and members of the grand apostacy from the pure primitive christian faith, *never will repent; no not even when the heaviest of temporal judgments come on them*: for even then, we are told they *shall gnaw their tongues for pain and anguish, and blaspheme God yet the more.* Therefore, to bring in this most glorious æra of righteousness, peace, and felicity, the judgments of God will consume the man of sin, with all his connections and dependencies. This may suffice to shew, the Millennium will be introduced by terrible judgments on the wicked, who continue the enemies of Christ and his gospel.

I have hinted that several of the vials are already poured out, and that it is very likely the remainder will soon follow. Indeed I believe it will be found true : it appears to me that the *sixth* is now spending itself on the papal antichrist, and that it will run out on him and entirely annihilate him and his dominion ; and though for a moment, comparatively speaking, his existence may appear to be prolonged, yet it is but as it were for a moment ; that the just vengeance of God may the more effectually fall on him, and his rejected adherents. They have loved to shed blood, and have spilled the blood of the best of men, with unexampled profusion ; I mean the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus ; now their day of reckoning arrives, and they must drink large draughts in return. Desolation will now be poured on the desolator, and his plagues become wonderful.

But it seems to me, that the *sixth* vial will effect the ruin of Mahometan Antichrist, and considering what has lately happened, and yet seems to be coming forward, one would think this vial had begun to be poured. Nor is this an impossible case, for indeed,  
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all things considered, it appears most likely ; and if so, the work will soon be finished, which it was intended it should accomplish. But lest any should deceive themselves with a mistaken idea, that the Pope and Mahomet are the only Antichrists, let us remind them here of what we have hinted before, that there are many others besides these ; let the following observations describe them : every sentiment and doctrine that opposes the gospel of Christ, or any part of it, is antichristian : now the gospel is a system of grace, which debases the pride of man and lays it in the dust, and exalts the Saviour in the highest. It rescues and saves the sinner, but destroys his sin ; it makes men holy, generous, and happy. This is its native tendency to diffuse light and solid peace and happiness wherever it is cordially received ; for it gives to God divine honors, and it restores men to a measure of that primitive purity and felicity which was enjoyed before the fall. I say, to a measure of it, and that measure is proportioned to the prevalence which these divine principles have on our hearts and lives. In a word, the gospel of Christ teaches all who truly understand and believe it, to renounce sin and self, to trust only in the Saviour for acceptance with God and eternal life, and to live in all holy obedience to his commands : and by these means to restore them to the favor and likeness of God. Such a system as this, is certainly the most noble, godlike, and felicitating that can be conceived of ; for it brings to God the highest honors, and to believing men the truest and most lasting felicity. In fine, it makes men eternally happy.

Now, to corrupt, deprave, oppose, or persecute the gospel or its professors, is to be guilty of the vilest and blackest of crimes ; and it renders such criminals superlatively worthy of the heaviest judgments of the Almighty. Such are really Antichrists, or which is the same thing in other words, they are the enemies of God, and some of the worst foes of their fellow men. Therefore, every doctrine which would set up an ecclesiastic headship and supremacy over the Church of Christ, and over the faith and consciences of the people

people of God, besides Christ's own authority, is to all intents and purposes antichristian. The placing the Redeemer's own supremacy in an individual, or in more than one two or ten, amounts to the same thing. God has set his King on his holy Hill, and there is no other lord of conscience but him : He only is Head over all things to his Church. To invade his prerogative then, is the highest presumption and the blackest blasphemy,

But likewise, all that doctrine which exalts sinful men and debases the Saviour, must be antichristian and abominable. That teaching which would lead men to be pharisaic on the one hand, or licentious on the other, cannot be of God, but is directly opposite to him ; and consequently, bears the image and superscription of antichrist. Therefore, all that doctrine which in any wise contradicts, opposes, or explains away the plain and evident sense of holy scripture, or sets at naught any of the divine commands or institutions, bears the same black mark. Likewise all that practice which promotes the sin and misery of men in any form, and spreads calamity and desolation through the world in any manner, is marked with the same stigma, and branded with the same appellation by the God of truth.

Consequently, the evil principles above referred to, and the destructive practices thence resulting, being opposed to the divine honor and human happiness, must and will be rooted up and swept from the earth. For God will set up the DISPENSATION of *purity, peace, and felicity*, which we are now contemplating *against all opposition* ; and every adversary thereto shall fall for its sake.

Therefore, let all be admonished to embrace the Saviour, to welcome the coming of his Kingdom, and to hail the blessed arrival of the Millennial Age in all its purity, felicity, and glory. And all the antichristian tribes particularly, may they have found repentance in due time, before the judgments of the Almighty take them away with a stroke, and fall on them to the uttermost. Let them be assured, that every impious



practice, and every pernicious principle, must give way to that more glorious dispensation of felicity and peace. May the Lord soon bless all men by its long desired arrival. But this leads me to my

III. Principle point, which is to shew, that after these judgments are inflicted, it will be seen they were designed to remove worse evils, and to introduce the most glorious part of the evangelic dispensation.

The vials being poured out, particularly the *sixth* and *seventh*, mentioned verses 12 and 17, of chap xvi. from whence our motto is selected; it will then be announced from the Temple of Heaven, that the work of *awful judgment* is *DONE*. i. e. the work which the infliction of the plagues on the enemies of Christ and his people, were designed to effect, is finished. When the *seventh* vial is poured into the air, a terrible wind and earthquake will shake every vestige of great Babel down, to rise no more. Awful indeed, will her fall be, and the effects of it felt where it is now the least expected. Where they are now saying peace and safety, they will then see *sudden destruction* come; and bitter indeed will their lamentation be. But those who will not be timely warned must be finally corrected, and take the consequences; but *Moses'* prayer is apropos here: *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*

But the work of vindictive justice being finished, and the awful punishment of the wicked past, the day of mercy will dawn. Then the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall fill the whole earth, and the Kingdom, and the greatness of the Kingdom, under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and *all Dominion shall serve and obey Him.*

Therefore, though the judgments which are coming on the antichristian world, are terrible and dreadful, yet they shall accomplish the best of purposes, by a removal of the worst of evils. For by taking away the mischief makers the mischief they have been doing will cease, and the miseries consequent on it: for after the

the fountain is dried, the streams will cease to flow. But the misery and ruin which the spirit, principles, and practices of the antichristian synagogue has brought on mankind, are infinitely greater than any punishment that can be inflicted on her in the present life. Therefore, though the judgment and punishment of antichrist may last some considerable time, and be of a *severe and tremendous* nature; yet the *ruin and misery* which *her delusions occasion*, are *infinitely worse*; or their evident tendency is to *enslave the bodies, and damn the souls* of men, and bring on them *present misery, and future destruction*. The vials of divine vengeance then, will but remove *worse evils*, and bring to mankind the *ævum of purity, felicity, and peace*. This will be the most glorious part of the gospel dispensation; for,

1. There will be a more glorious out-pouring of the divine influences than ever. The pentecostal day was eminently glorious in this respect; but the gospel abilee will be super-eminent. For the word of prophecy declares, that the spirit shall be poured out on *all flesh*; and that *ALL*, in consequence, *shall know the Lord*. Now, though I cannot conceive that every individual is meant by the word *all* here; yet, certainly it must mean the far greatest number of mankind at that time. And I believe the really godly will be far more numerous at that time, than ever the wicked have been at any time; except we are to leave out the days of *Noah*, when the flood came. Therefore the Millennium will be the most glorious part of the gospel dispensation, in that there will be a more abundant effusion of the divine influences. The pentecostal day was but an earnest of this more glorious day of the Spirit's mighty power and wonderful works. For now the power of the Highest will convert, not only three thousand at one time, and five thousand at another, but we are told, *A nation shall be born in a day*. This most prolific regeneration is the production of the Divine Spirit's renovating power; for indeed his era will emphatically be a *Dispensation of the Spirit*. But in the next place,

2. This

2. This happy period will be the most glorious, in that the number of conversions will be abundantly *more* than ever: the word of the Lord will not be preached nor heard in vain, or as it is now, with an awakening or two now and then; but there is every reason to believe, that *thousands and tens of thousands* will not only hear, but receive the word, from place to place, and from time to time.

But the word of prophecy foretells the re-call and replacing of God's ancient people, the Jews, in Judea, and their subsequent conversion to Jesus our glorious Lord; and it appears to me, that before this most glorious work of conversion is to be expected, this wonderful event must take place. It appears to me, that the apostle *Paul* says as much in his epistle to the *Romans*, chap. xi. 15. *For if the casting of them away be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.* Perhaps by the *reconciling* of the world in consequence of the rejection of the Jews. may be mean,

1st. That a vast number of the Gentiles would be converted to the christian faith, experience reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, and become the visible church instead of the Jews; and we see to this day that this has actually been the case. But,

2dly. The rejection and dispersion of the Jews, the demolition of their capital and temple, together with the destruction of their church and state, was most evidently foretold, so plainly, that no attentive reader can mistake either the predictions of the old testament, or the declarations of the new, on this head. The prophets of old, and our Lord himself had predicted it so strongly, that if it had not taken place, there would have been serious objections to the truth of these prophecies: but the predictions have been confirmed by the event, and thereby perhaps thousands were reconciled to the belief of these predictions, and to the christian faith itself.

Now, their recall in the latter days, and their return to Judea: their re-incorporation as a nation and a body politic under the *King of Kings*, and their subsequent conversion

conversion to him, are as clearly and plainly foretold, both in the old testament and the new, as any thing can be; and *blind indeed* must that man be, who cannot, or will not see it. Now, as their rejection of old was a reconciling the world, at least many of the world to the christian faith; their re-gathering and conversion will have *infinitely greater effect*; for, says the apostle, it shall be *life from the dead*. The valley of dry bones shall rise from their dry, dead, scattered state, and all unite bone to its bone, and become a living army; an army, miraculously raised from death and dispersion, and reanimated, and reinvigorated, shall stand up as chief and principal in the ways of God, and become the first people on the face of the earth, both for piety and prosperity. When this is done, all the predictions relative to this wonderful people, will be so actually accomplished, that the rankest infidel that ever lived will be obliged to shut his mouth for ever, and forced to own, that there is a reality in the Bible Revelation, and that the prophets were men of God, who spoke the words of the Almighty, and were actually inspired by him to fore-shew so clearly these wonderful events, for hundreds and thousands of years before they took place. This will have a most enlivening effect on the world at large, and on the present visible church in particular.

Now it will be evident, that God rules in the armies of heaven, and amongst the children of men, and does in heaven and on earth whatsoever pleaseth him. Now, antichristianity and infidelity will fly away like birds of the night, and Jew and Gentile embrace the Saviour, and the true christian faith. Now too, after the Jews are conducted back to their own country and become a nation, the Deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Now the Temple of Heaven will be opened at Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord proceed from thence to all around. *Isaiab* says, *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. *Micah* repeats the words, and both of them tell us, this shall be after men have beaten their swords into ploughshares

*scars and their spears into pruning-hooks*; and the nations have learned to cease from war. Consequently, it is yet to come, and will I think, soon be fulfilled; how soon I will not say, for I know not, but I think it will not be very long first. Now when all this has taken place, conversion to christianity will be rapid indeed. Millions will be flocking to hear the word, and join in the worship of God, and enquiring the way to Zion with their faces thither-ward. In this also, the Millennium will exceed in glory all the former dispensations, for it will produce a larger progeny of spiritual children, both of Jews and Gentiles, than all the revivals which have ever preceded it, *perhaps ten thousand fold*. But in the next place,

3. The Millennium will be the most glorious part of the gospel dispensation, for that sin will be more than ever suppressed and subdued, and holiness more than ever promoted. Then God will put his fear in the hearts of men, and write his law there, and his loving-kindness will constrain them to forsake iniquity and live to his glory. Then detested swearing will cease, and the ears of the pious no more be wounded by horrible oaths and curses, and the dreadful imprecations of the profane and flagitious; nor truth be falsified by the impious liar; nor the charity which hopeth all things, be imposed on by the deceit of the hypocrite; nor impurity be permitted to defile the body and damn the soul of man; nor any other abomination which the deceit and wickedness of the human heart, or the infernal policy of the grand destroyer can invent, will be suffered to prevail. For the faith of men will be pure and genuine, and then the good fruits must follow, as the native and necessary consequence; for all who understand and believe the gospel *now*, know well, that faith works by love, and purifies the heart: then, the heart being purified by grace, the life will be to the praise of him who is the truth and the life. The heart being turned heaven-ward there will be genuine love to God and holiness, and a forsaking of all iniquity. But,

4. In this most felicitating æra, hurting and destroying

ying will be done away, and the system of human chery be suffered to exist no longer. The implements of human destruction and carnage will be verted to more benevolent and friendly purposes, ely, to the cultivation of the earth in a much e enlarged and productive manner than at present ; the more advantageous prosecution of useful arts, nces, and manufactures. For whenever the gospel ully and generally understood and believed, men respect the authority of the *divine legislator*, cheerfully submit to his laws ; then will they e the abominable art and practice of destruction the great destroyer, and listen to the mild, gentle, generous commands of the best friend of man ; o says, *All things whatsoever ye would that men ul do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law the prophets*. This will then be the great governing iple of general action, which will influence the le body of human society ; it will become their *viere* and *derniere* resort. For this will be the age universal peace and love. Harmony among men then be enjoyed, and the songs of the heavenly s at the Redeemer's nativity, will be fully realized :

*Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good towards men*. It must be so, for now the reign of Prince of Darknefs will be completely overthrown, himself confined to the abyfs ; and the reign of Prince of Peace in men's hearts, will make their s, harmless, their hearts tender, and their souls y to love each other ; for then they will have learnt the elect of God, holy and beloved, to put on vels of mercies, and this will lead them to universal ction and good will. But in the next place,

. This will be the *Ævum* of the grand regenera- i, called a new creation of heaven and earth. By ch expressions, I cannot conceive to be meant a al re-creation of the visible heavens or the earth ; by the earth I suppose the state of the world is int ; and by the heaven the state of the Church of l. Now, when we are told by the prophets in the testament, and the apostles in the new, that God will

will make new heavens and a new earth ; I understand a grand renovation and restoration to purity and rectitude ; truth and holiness will prevail in the church, and justice and equity in every department of civil society. Now, whatever is wrong will be put away, and whatever is right, just, and consistent with the love of God and our neighbour, will be vastly better attended to. This will have such a happy tendency, and be productive of such beneficial effects, that the general condition of men will be so much altered for the better, that it will resemble *a new creation*. For now the divine influences from on high will so wonderfully illuminate the minds of men, that they will discover what is wrong, and rectify it ; is it sin within them ? they will hate and forsake it. Is it sin round about them ? they will reprove and correct it, and it will flee before them. *Is there any thing highly esteemed among men at present, which is an abomination in the sight of God ? There are assuredly many things of this description*, but now divine light will discover it, and divine grace will influence men to detest and abhor it, and to flee from it ; and every thing of this nature will be done away. Then men will discern what is right, and cheerfully adopt it ; and if there is found any pernicious domination, it will be done away, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical. We say *NOT that just government will be destroyed, no, nothing can be farther from our thoughts* ; nor shall I go about to discuss any particular system of politics, I leave that to others. This, however, I will venture to affirm, that truly enlightened men will readily adopt the best methods to secure *general happiness*, and to do the *greatest good with the least expence*, to render the great body of society as comfortable as possible, *not to aggrandize the few, and starve the many* ; but to render to ALL the means of *comfortable support*.

The Millennium will be productive of this. For men in this time will be universally pious and christian, and their constant aim and end will be the honor and glory of God, and the universal good of their fellow men.

This

This grand regeneration will be so great in its nature and so happy in its effects, that it will exhibit a change so vastly for the best, that it will seem as if the *Garden of Eden* was become a *paradise world*, and the *whole earth made up of it*. For this reason, I conceive it is, that the scripture calls it a new creation of heaven and earth. It is a renovation of men and measures, and it will be begun and carried on by the power of God. Should any oppose his work, or attempt to hinder his establishment of righteousness and true felicity, they will be dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel; for God will do all his pleasure.

The civil and religious hemispheres will be adorned with luminaries at once proper in kind, and every way salutary in operation: destructive meteors must disappear, and luminaries of *celestial origin* will occupy their places; from them will be emitted pure light to cheer the mind, and genial heat to animate and invigorate the powers, and divine influence to give to the whole a heavenly direction and tendency. In a word, the Kingdom of Heaven will be set up on earth, *The Tabernacle of God will be with men*; and the Lord of Heaven will dwell among them. All this, and much more, is implied in the following scriptures:—*Isa. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5. —lx. 19, 20—lxv. 17 to the end*; compared with *Dan. vii. 26, to the end.—Rev. xx. 4 to 7. And many others, too numerous to be quoted here.*

IV. That this will be productive of the highest felicity, both spiritual and temporal, that the church and world ever yet saw; for it will shed its benign influence all over the earth. We are expressly told, that *God will take the vail of the covering from off ALL NATIONS, and from ALL PEOPLE, and that all flesh shall see his salvation*. Therefore, the Millennium will be productive of the *temporal and spiritual* felicity of men, beyond any thing yet known on earth. For,

1. God will then be more abundantly known than hitherto; and this knowledge will be of a right kind, of a spiritual and influential nature. God will be known in his love and grace, and enjoyed in the hearts of his children, more generally and abundantly than ever.

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For



# ERRATA.

- Page 3. line 8 from top, for *dissiping* read *dissiping*.
- Page 11. line 18 from bottom for *numble/s* read *numberless*.
- Page 12. 5th Observation, after *who*, insert *can*.
- Page 18. line 8 from bottom, for *man* read *men*.
- Page 19. line 12, for *most* read *must*.
- Page 36. line 9, for *light* read *light*.
- Page 49. in and. reply by Civitas, line 1, for *thing* read *t*.
- Page 51. line 10, for *powd* read *power*.
- Page 53. ver. last. for *my* read *may*.
- Page 86. line 15 from bottom, for *undervived* read *underit*.
- Page 89. line 7, for *creatur* read *creator*.
- Page 102. line 3 from bottom, for *your* read *you*.
- Page 122. line 9, for *jun-gen* read *jun-bram*.
- Page 124. line 10 from bottom, after *virgin* insert *is*.
- Page 139. line 6, after *number* insert *of*.
- Page 119. line 9, for *intercepted* read *interposed*.











