

BRIEF

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON THE

DOCTRINE

OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

In which it is proved to be utterly repugnant to the principles of moral government, and inconsistent with the word of God.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah, viii. 20.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

IT must appear at first glance to be of infinite importance to the authors and abettors of the doctrine of universal salvation, that they consider well the ground on which they stand. The error, (if it be one) cannot be small, or of little consequence. It strikes at the character and government of Jehovah the Eternal King. If they should be found talking wickedly for God, and pleading deceitfully for him, the case is dreadful! The consequences of the doctrine to their own souls cannot be uninteresting, and if they be contributing their exertions to harden the hearts of the impenitent, to soothe and flatter them in sin, and sing them into a deeper sleep on the falling brink of eternal ruin; how tremendous is the idea! The apostle says, knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men; our God is a consuming fire; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hope and fear seem to be the two powerful springs of action in the human mind. The gospel is a solemn serious address to both; there the lightnings of God's wrath flash; his thunders roar; his majesty, purity, truth and justice appear in terrible array; there also his love and goodness assume the most winning aspect; his grace and mercy shine with the most amiable radiance. But there is no truth in all the book of God more clear, than that an acceptance of the Saviour and submission

sion to him, are indispensibly necessary to our salvation by him; and that this acceptance and submission must take place in this life, in order to gain that end, one would think, is pretty clearly taught also. The doctrine of a dispensation of the gospel in hell, or of tenders of grace and mercy there, to say the least of it, does not sound well. The author of this is a lover of mankind, and of divine truth; he wishes to follow truth wherever it leads. If the new doctrine be truth, he wishes to see it. From love to mankind, and he hopes, a sincere regard to their salvation, he has given his sentiments on it, which he submits to the candour of the public.

The substance of this small piece was drawn up several years ago, but its publication delayed for certain reasons known to the author.

**BRIEF ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE DOCTRINE OF
UNIVERSAL SALVATION.**

IN order to a clear perception of the absurdity of that doctrine which I am about to consider, it may be proper to premise some observations on the nature of God's moral government; as inattention to this, seems to lie at the foundation of the new scheme. The idea of punishing men for their sins appears hideous, and the idea of eternal punishment much more so. The doctrine of universal salvation is extremely popular, and bears the semblance of great benevolence in its authors. But were it even true, some have questioned whether it would shew benevolence to propagate it, as it can produce no good effects on society. But if false, as most certainly it is, it is the most shocking cruelty to deceive men with a lie.

It will be readily granted by all men, that God has an undoubted right to give laws to his creatures. He has a property in them which is altogether singular. He is the universal parent, the creator and preserver of all creatures. Has a father a right to govern his family? a governor to execute the laws of his government? much more has the father of all, the supreme governor of the universe, a right to give laws to the workmanship of his own hands and see them executed. It must also be granted, that the goodness of God is clearly manifested in giving laws to his creatures, for the regulation of their conduct. This is a remark to which we should carefully attend. We are apt to suppose, that the divine goodness is displayed only in giving us these things which we call benefits or mercies; and that his laws are arbitrary, unnecessary and unreasonable restraints. But this is far from being the case; for the divine laws are all calculated not only to promote the glory of the lawgiver, but also the good of the creation. This remark is universally true. It is by the laws of the system that the system is upheld. Were the law of attraction or gravity to cease, this globe would fall to pieces, perhaps to annihilation. Were the sun to depart from the center and flame lawless through the mighty void. Were the planets to fly off from their orbits and rush wildly through the vast expanse: or were the sea to rise from its bed and dash itself over

its boundaries on the face of the earth : or were the brutal tribes to lose their reverence for man and rise in one general conspiracy against his life : on all, on any of these suppositions, the life of man would be totally extinguished : on some of them matter would be wreck'd on matter, and worlds crush'd on worlds. But what are these suppositions? they are no more than to suppose that God should revoke, or that these creatures should transgress were it possible the laws which God hath given them. But shall we suppose such terrible consequences to follow on inanimate or irrational creatures transgressing the laws of their nature; and no ill consequences to follow on rational and spiritual beings transgressing the laws of theirs? That is, shall we suppose that matter is more excellent than spirit; the laws of matter more noble than the laws of spirit; or the destruction of matter more terrible than the destruction of spirits? That the divine laws are all culculated for the good of man, is manifest. It will readily appear to any attentive observer, that the principal part of our miseries flows from the wickedness of man's nature and life. His unruly passions have broken loose from the reins of reason. They are an overflowing source of misery to himself and his fellow creatures. From whence come wars and fightings among you? says the apostle, come they not of your lusts which war in your members. Whence is it that this world is deluged with human blood? whence the necessity of gaols and gibbets? whence fraud, cruelty, injustice, extortion, oppression, thefts, robberies, murders and all the works of the flesh mentioned by the Apostle, Gal. 5th chap. proceed they not from the wicked heart of man; which is said to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Yes, the carnal mind is enmity against God; and is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. Out of the heart do proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness and blasphemies. This is the poisoned fountain which deluges the world with sin and misery. This is the corrupt tree which bears corrupt fruit in a great abundance. And on the whole, what a happy world would this be; take it in every other way just as it is; were men to be and do to themselves and others, what the laws of God require them to be and do?

It is true man is not governed, and cannot be governed by the same kind of laws as the irrational and inanimate creatures. No, he must be governed by laws suited to his nature whatever
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that be, as they are by laws suited to their nature. Wherein he partakes with them in any thing common to their nature, he is governed by the same laws. His material body is subject to the law of gravity or attraction as well as other pieces of matter; and in submission to this, his will has no choice; and in many persons the understanding no knowledge. He has instinctive propensities in his nature, which are common to him with the brutes, viz. to propagate his species and preserve his life. And as in these he ascends in the scale of being nearer to intelligence, his understanding and will have scope for exercise, in the direction and government of them. It is true, he can no more, by any act of his understanding and will, eradicate these propensities from his nature, than the brutes can; and it is fit and proper it should be so, they were never intended to be eradicated. They answer most valuable purposes in God's creation. But they ought to be kept by him under the conduct and guidance of reason; and most certainly a man yielding to these propensities without the government of reason, levels himself to an equality with the brutes; nay, degrades himself far below them, for they act according to the complete system of laws in their nature; but he does not; his rational and spiritual powers are prostrated in the dust.

These propensities above mentioned, clearly belong to his material and animal part. His rational and spiritual part must be governed in a quite different and far higher manner. Man is a rational, intelligent, a free, and therefore a moral agent. He is capable of acting spontaneously or from choice; and God will be served by him agreeably to the exalted rank which he holds in the scale of being, that is, not from necessity but choice. In a word, man cannot be governed solely by instinct, for this good reason, he is not a brute, nor can he be under a mechanical government, because he is not a machine; nor can he be governed by necessity and force, because he is not inanimate matter. Therefore the method which God has taken to govern him (and none other could be suitable to his nature) is, to propose a law, holy, just and good to his reason, enforce it by his rightful and dread authority, and secure obedience by a penal sanction. The authority of the lawgiver and goodness of the law, are calculated to gain the assent of his reason; the promise of felicity in case of obedience, to engage the consent of his will; the penal sanction to work on his fears, and deter him from disobedience. It is clear that a penal sanc-
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tion is necessary to constitute a moral law; without it there can be no such law. The precept, if we may on this supposition call it so, will amount to no more than a simple advice. If the creature take it, it is well; if not, there is no danger; and thus the will of the creature, not that of the lawgiver is the rule, which will place man totally independent of God. It is further manifest, that if a law once had a penalty annexed to it; but after a while the penalty be taken away; in that case we may certainly affirm, the law is repealed; or which amounts to the same thing, if the penalty be not executed in case of transgression, there is a total repeal of the law; hence it follows, that the divine goodness is manifested not only in giving a law to man, but also in enforcing obedience by a penal sanction, and in executing the penalty in case of transgression. Is the divine goodness displayed in sustaining the laws of the material system, in supporting this earth in its various revolutions, seasons and productions? much more in supporting the moral system. Is it manifested in keeping the brutal tribes in subjection to the laws of their nature? much more in keeping angels and men subject to the laws of theirs, or even in taking the wisest and fittest measures for the purpose; better, infinitely better, I had almost said, that ten thousand material systems should perish, than that the foundations of the moral system should slide and give way, or God's moral government over angels and men should fail, and on supposition of the penalty not being executed in case of transgression, it must totally fail; the divine law must be totally vacated; the precept is violated by the creature, and the penalty set aside by the creator, and thus there is an end of all law; moral government is no more; the divine administration is at an end. And let men, if they can, invent any other way to sustain this government, than the one pointed out, that is, any other suited to the nature of angels and men. The voice of reason proclaims aloud its propriety and fitness, and revelation assures us, this is the very way invented by infinite wisdom and goodness, and established by divine authority.

There is a moral fitness in things, from which the deity cannot depart, from which it would be imperfection in him to depart. Shall angels and men, intelligent, free and moral agents; be governed in the same manner as brutes or inanimate matter? it cannot be. Those then who would exalt the divine mercy to such a pitch, as to let sin pass without any adequate punishment,

ment, or in other words set aside the penalty of the law; would exalt or rather debase it so as to repeal all the laws of heaven. Mercy would overturn justice, overthrow the divine government, prostrate in the dust Jehovah's throne; dissolve the obligation of all moral duty; sully the character of the supreme magistrate of heaven and earth; and overwhelm the whole rational creation with sin, anarchy, death and ruin. It would (*horribile dictu*) extinguish all intelligence, God, angels and men! there is no other alternative but one, and that is to make angels and men brutes or inanimate matter: or to say that there never should have been in the scale of being such creatures as angels and men. How tremendous is the impiety of men, which not only spreads disorder, confusion and ruin among the works of God: but thus assaults the throne of the omnipotent himself!

This world is therefore full of the goodness of the Lord. It is true it lies in wickedness and is full of sin. But this does not impair or diminish the divine goodness. But God manifests his goodness like himself, or in a manner worthy of his divine perfections. He is good, not only as a Creator and preserver, but also as a moral governor. The judge of all the earth will do right. He manifests his goodness in a manner adapted to the sinful and rebellious state of the world; in sustaining the majesty of his government, the obligation of his law, the glory of his character and the whole moral system; by the execution of the penalty. He will never abdicate nor overturn his own government; nor give his consent to man's sin and rebellion. It cannot be. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and cannot look on sin. The wages of sin is death. He will assert his own sovereignty and dominion; we see him sometimes taking the work of vengeance into his own hand, and by the flood destroying the world of the ungodly; by famine, by pestilence and earthquakes; laying waste nations, kingdoms and cities. It is true, there is not an equal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life. We apprehend the truth on this subject to be, that there is so much of this distribution, as clearly to evince there is a God who judgeth in the earth. But at the same time so much of an inequality in it, as to give full force to the argument, that there must be a future state of retribution; when every work will be brought into judgment, and every secret thing; and when God will render to every man according to his works. The mystery of providence will then be finished,

nished, all apparent disorders in the divine government rectified, and all inequalities made equal. So that light springs from this dark cloud, and the infinite wisdom of God shines in the midst of this obscurity. For were the distribution of rewards and punishments here, less equal, we would not so clearly see the footsteps of the divine majesty in his government of the world. Were it more so; we should want a strong irrefragable argument from reason, for the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. God in innumerable instances shews in this life, that he is not an idle and careless spectator of the wickedness of men. This he manifests in adapting the dispensations of his providence to the moral character of nations, by granting prosperity to the virtuous, and having always a rod of correction or destruction ready for those who far exceed in wickedness. And the same remark may often be made respecting individuals; he makes atrocious vices as certainly consume their authors, as fire does the stubble. This is wonderfully verified, in the frequent detection of the unnatural crime of murder; and bringing the perpetrator to condign punishment even in this life, by a chain of providences which the wisdom of man had no hand in forming, and of which the criminal had neither the smallest foresight nor fear. But yet it cannot be denied, that irreligion and vice in a certain degree, are many times prosperous and on some occasions triumphant; while religion and virtue are oppressed and borne down. The conclusion of reason is, that to finish the plan of the divine government; and fully display the justice and goodness of the divine character; there must be a future state of rewards and punishments. Thus far reason goes without halting, and while it readily draws this conclusion, it is beautiful to observe the coincidence of revelation: its voice confirms it, for God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

It may be objected to this reasoning, that the execution of the penalty annexed to human laws is not always necessary to the sustentation of government among men. Very true; but in general it is necessary, and takes place; and were any magistrate generally to neglect the execution of it, under the pretence of mercy; we should say he was very weak, very wicked, cruel and unjust. Mercy to criminals would be cruelty and injustice.

justice to the community at large. But there is an unavoidable imperfection in all human affairs; human governments certainly partake of this imperfection; their laws are imperfect; their penalties inadequate; and their administrations defective. Sometimes government is too feeble to bring some bold and powerful malefactor to justice. Sometimes men see fit to remit the penalty to one, in order to detect and bring to punishment a greater number. Sometimes only the leaders are capitally punished; because it is supposed that those who were ensnared by them, were deceived, and therefore not so guilty. Sometimes it would weaken a state too much, were it to punish all the offenders. This however we may affirm, that wherever we see governments remitting the penalty of a law, it must be owing to some imperfection or other in the law, the sanction, the government, or the character of the governors. For were we to form an idea of a government absolutely perfect, it would be one which stated a perfect ratio between crimes and punishments; and in no case whatsoever failed to execute the penalty. It is absurd therefore to argue from imperfect governments among men, to the perfect government of God. His government is like himself, infinitely perfect. There can be no defect in his laws, no weakness in his character, no imperfection in his administration, and accordingly we see, that pardoning mercy revealed in the gospel, is granted only on the ground of a full and complete atonement, made by Jesus Christ as the sinners surety. The penalty had its full effect on him, and thus all the purposes of maintaining the authority of the divine law, sustaining the majesty of government, and asserting the dignity of the divine character, are fully answered in the case of those who accept of that atonement; while mercy, infinite mercy reigns in their salvation; because their own personal characters are as wicked, as vile, and fall as far short of what the law demands, as if no atonement had been made at all; or as if they had been saved without a regard to any.

But were we even to allow ourselves to reason from imperfect governments among men, to the absolutely perfect government of God, it would afford but small ground of hope; for it is evident that even according to the course of human governments, but a very few could be pardoned, and it would be totally uncertain, who these should be. To talk of repentance as intitling to pardon, is nonsense; for this is far from being the case, even in the weak imperfect and feeble governments among men. Besides, if repentance in one, intitle to pardon, certainly re-
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penitance in all will do the same, otherwise God would be partial and unjust. And as no doubt the criminal, when he sees the misery to which he hath reduced himself, will from a principle of self-love regret his folly; this would infer the necessity of remitting the penalty to all, and so put an end to the divine law and government. And on this supposition, the divine law would have no penalty, but repentance, which would make the divine government more imperfect than any among men, convert the penalty into a blessing and rather encourage to sin than deter from it. But we see that men under the divine administration may repent, and yet perish. Judas repented, and yet plunged into absolute despair. Indeed the gospel represents faith and repentance as necessarily, connected with an interest in Christ's atonement; and in this connection alone they are available to pardon and salvation. We do not here speak of God's remitting temporal punishments in the present state; which state is preparatory and in some sense probationary for the grand assize, the final judgment. As he regards any degree of moral virtue and good order among men, and consequently any degree of repentance and reformation; he may for a time remit the temporal punishment, and give them longer time. Thus he spared Nineveh when penitent. One grand design of the divine dispensations in this state, is to prepare the world for the day of judgment and final retribution, that the wicked may be inexcusable at that day. But not one instance in all the book of God can be produced, which will prove, that repentance alone will avail at that awful day. See Proverbs, chap. I. 24—33.

On this scheme of reasoning, we see the necessity of the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ. If mercy be manifested to the sinner, let it be honourable mercy, comporting with the glory of the divine character, his spotless holiness and perfect justice: mercy consistent with the honour of his law, the support of his government and the good of the rational and moral world. Not such mercy as would annihilate all government, overturn all justice, repeal every moral precept, subvert all order and equity, put a final period to the moral system, dethrone God, destroy angels and men, and convert the whole intelligent and rational creation into a mass of sin, iniquity and ruin.

The authors and abettors of the doctrine of universal salvation, would do well solemnly to ponder these things, least under the pretext of exalting the divine mercy, they be found
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pleading wickedly for God and talking deceitfully for him. There have appeared two schemes of that doctrine ; one is, that there will be no punishment at all in a future state ; the other allows that there will ; but maintains that the wicked shall be all purified in hell, and after passing through, perhaps, many states of torment, shall all finally, some sooner, some later, escape to glory and felicity. The two schemes are not essentially different ; they differ only as to the time of salvation. The first is diametrically opposite to the principles of the divine government stated above. It subverts the principles of natural religion and moral government. In effect denies a day of judgment, and a future state of rewards and punishments ; goes on the false hypothesis that there is an equal distribution of these in the present state, or allows the divine government to sink under the charge of iniquity and injustice ; contradicts every doctrine and every declaration of the bible relative to the subject. It is the doctrine of sadducees, epicureans, sceptics, deists, atheists ; bears the most malignant aspect towards the order, purity and peace of civil society, while it is manifest, that it can be of no service to men, either in this life or that which is to come ; for were it true, those who deny it, are in no danger ; but if false, as most certainly it is, how dreadfully pernicious ! In short it is such a chaos of absurdity, impiety and nonsense, that it is truly astonishing any rational creature should be involved in a moments doubt about it. The second scheme is at first appearance more plausible, and therefore likely to have a wider range. We shall therefore make a few strictures on it. They begin with telling us, that the Hebrew and Greek words translated *eternal*, *everlasting*, and, *for ever and ever*, are sometimes applied to a limited duration, and signify in many instances no more than a long period ; and therefore when applied to hell torments must mean no more. This would be fine reasoning. In some cases they signify no more ; therefore they can signify no more in this case. In some cases it is extremely wicked to take away a man's life ; therefore it is extremely wicked to do so in the case of lawful war ; or in pursuance of a just sentence of a judicial court. The authors of the scheme cannot deny, that these words sometimes point out a proper eternity or endless duration ; because the same words are used to express the duration and perfections of the deity. They cannot be ignorant that in all languages words are used both in a proper and figurative sense. When we hear the everlasting hills mentioned,

common sense teaches, that the phrase is figurative. When an Englishman says, I am infinitely or eternally obliged to you; every body knows he speaks figuratively and uses these words in an improper sense. What is the true, proper and strict meaning of the words, *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *for ever and ever*? Is it not an endless duration? If this then be their proper meaning, how will they prove that they are used in a figurative and not in their proper sense, when applied to hell torments? But they will say we cannot prove, that when so applied, the words must mean an endless duration. This however we will attempt. There is no way to determine when they are used figuratively or properly; but by attending to the subject to which they are applied. If applied to any thing in this world, or in this life, they must be used figuratively; but when applied to any thing in the other world, or in a future state, they must be used in their strict proper sense. Now hell torments appertain not to this world, but the next, not to time but to eternity. There must be an essential difference between the mode of duration called time, and the mode of duration called eternity. This difference we cannot define with certainty, because we are acquainted only with the first. An able writer has attempted it*. We acquire says he, the idea of time, by a succession of ideas; but some have called eternity, a *standing point*, an *everlasting Now*. Common sense however teaches, that eternity must be essentially different from time, and therefore if there be any future happiness or punishment at all, they must be eternal. The new scheme is absurd in this, that its authors suppose men still to be in time, after they are departed out of time into eternity; that is they suppose time to be eternity, and eternity time. It is certain that hell torments never point out a time-punishment, but an eternal one.

The advocates for this dangerous doctrine plead the satisfaction and atonement of Jesus Christ as the foundation of their opinion, and if that were embraced and accepted by all men; doubtless all men would be saved by it. But the gospel tells us, and facts confirm the truth; that many reject it. The same gospel assures us, that if this atonement be rejected, instead of being saved by it; this rejection will aggravate most terribly the condemnation of the rejectors. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? if he that despised Moses law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment,

* *Soame Jenyns*, Esq. one of the lords of trade in Britain.

punishment, suppose he ye, shall be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace? but the universalists tell us, these and other texts to the same purpose do not move them. The merit of Christ's obedience and death is infinite. He has paid the debt of the whole human race. They owe nothing to God; but God owes every thing to them; happiness in this world and eternal life in the world to come. God is now the debtor and they the creditors. His full due is paid; yea more, he is enriched by the payment. Their debt was but finite. He has got an infinite reimbursement. Let men live as they list; wantonly violate the divine law or studiously keep it; it is all one. God has no just demands on them. It would be injustice in him to find fault; at least the height of injustice to punish them eternally. Perhaps, say some, impenitent sinners may suffer a few years in the other world; but an eternity of happiness must follow that period; in comparison of which eternity, many years or ages of suffering will be only as the drop of a bucket compared to the ocean. If it were possible to reason with men in such a reverie, we might pause a moment and ask: is there any such language in all the book of God? what wealth did God lose by man's disobedience? How much poorer did he become? what riches are restored to him by Jesus Christ? what profit accrues to the almighty by the service or righteousness of any? can a man be profitable to God as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any gain to the almighty that thou art righteous? and is not Jesus Christ himself the mighty God and everlasting Father? any question about wealth, property, debt, or commercial justice, is altogether foreign to the purpose here.

It is also absurd to argue, that because Christ's merit is infinite; therefore it must extend to the whole human race; for by the same argument it must extend to all the devils; and if it be said, God did not see it proper to include them in the appointment of Christ's death, it may be readily answered, this overthrows the argument which is built on the infinite merit of Christ, and places it on the divine sovereignty. And it is certain the scriptures assert the same sovereignty in the appointment and acceptance of the death of Christ only for those who should accept or embrace it. The truth is, the necessity of an infinite atonement does not arise from the number, but nature of sin. An infinite atonement is as necessary to the pardon of

one sin, as ten thousand; and its end may be gained as completely in the one case as the other. He that offends in one point is guilty of all, says James. Numbers do not vary the nature or kind. Sin is justly said to be an infinite evil. See what one sin in our first parents did. It brought ruin on the whole world. It defaced the image of God on man, corrupted his nature, involved him and all his posterity in a sad moral necessity of sinning still more and more; which is a part of the curse as well as penal evil, and is the very thing meant by spiritual or moral death, that is, men are wicked because they will not be good, their carnal minds are enmity against it; which is no excuse for sin, but an aggravation of it. It has exposed the whole human race to innumerable miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. And take any one sin committed by any of all the human race, and suppose it the first sin in the world; it would produce the same effects on him and his posterity. The first sin of the rebel angels was equally fatal. The connection between sin and perdition does not arise only from the appointment of heaven, but from the nature of the thing. For as the earth, in her diurnal revolution, turning her face from the sun, is necessarily involved in darkness; by an equal or greater necessity, a spirit revolting from God, is involved in darkness death and ruin. The end and design of the death of Christ has been already pointed out, viz. the manifestation of the glory of the divine character, the sustaining of his moral government, the honour and obligation of his law, while he pardons sin. Now this end would be gained effectually in the salvation of one sinner; and Christ's atonement would have been necessary to the salvation of that one.

Can it be injustice in God then, to punish eternally those who reject that atonement? far from it. Nay, we may affirm, the great judge of heaven and earth Jesus Christ, would do no act of distributive or personal injustice to true believers, were he to cast them into utter darkness and punish them for their sins eternally in hell, his atonement and their faith in it notwithstanding. The injustice in this case (if any) would be done to himself, in submitting to punishment which he did not deserve. Their salvation is not an act of strict distributive or personal justice; but of mere rich sovereign grace.

When we speak of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, it would be absurd to understand it, as if the act of righteousness were transferred from the saviour to the sinner,

ner, so as to become the sinner's personal act. Nor is it less absurd to say, Christ's merit is transferred. Merit and demerit are personal qualities, which can never be transferred personally from one to another; they must forever adhere to the subjects of the one and the other. Riches or wealth may be transferred; but moral good and turpitude cannot shift hands so. When we speak of the imputation of sin to Christ, it would be absurd to say, the act of sin or even the turpitude of it, was transferred to Christ; or that the ill desert of it became personally his ill desert. He was the Father's beloved Son, his delight, and deserved the highest glory, even when suffering the deepest ignominy. And when we affirm the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness to believers, it cannot mean, that the act of sin is no more; for what is done cannot be undone; nor is the ill desert of sin annihilated. Even when they are accounted righteous and treated accordingly, they are personally deserving of hell; and this is what makes free grace conspicuous in their salvation.

It may be therefore affirmed, that no injustice taken in a strict distributive sense, would be done to true believers; were they to be cast for ever into hell. What injustice then can be done to unbelievers who reject the atonement; though Christ reject them. Do not many of them account it foolishness? do not they despise and mock it? have not many of them violently persecuted Christ and those who followed him?

It is to no purpose to say here, that his gospel is not preached to all men; and therefore multitudes of men cannot spurn or reject it; for it is certain, thrice at least, salvation through him has been published to all men. It is incontrovertible that Adam taught it to his posterity. And again Noah a preacher of righteousness to his children. We can entertain no rational doubt of this. How then did they lose it? through the enmity and opposition of their own hearts to it; by their own pride, perfidiousness and baseness. Some great man among them, conspicuous for his genius and abilities; some noted deist, some Hume, Voltaire, or Herbert, would in the pride of his heart despise the divine counsels; pronounce them foolishness and promise to shew the people a better way. They admiring his genius and boldness, would, through the pride of their hearts and wishing to resemble such a Colossus as much as possible, listen to him with earnest attention, and embrace his scheme. Some Nimrod or Jeroboam wishing to establish his tyranny on the ruins of the peoples liberties, would study to sink them in ignorance and blind submission to his will.

Thus Jeroboam would not permit Israel to go up to Jerusalem to worship the true God, lest it should alienate their hearts from his government; and this finally sunk them in ignorance, idolatry and ruin. Again after the resurrection of Christ, the gospel was published to all nations. Go, says Christ to his disciples, into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That this was verily done, we have authentic evidence from history. In Asia, in Europe, and Africa, famous churches were erected; where now heathen and mahometan darkness reigns. How came they to lose the inestimable privilege? because they did not value it, did not think it worthy of retention. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. There is a surprising proclivity in the human heart to revolt from God. Facts universally confirm this, especially the three great apostasies; after Adam, Noah and the apostolic age. God cannot and will not force mercies on men.

It is ridiculous to hear men talking in the form universalists do. Let us look to the great men in our day; do they esteem the gospel as a privilege worth retaining? are not many of them professed or in part concealed deists? do not they make their sport of the gospel in conversation and writing? do they not neglect the public ordinances of religion, and account it a mean thing to sit at Jesus feet and hear his words? are there not many such in the city of Philadelphia? are they not doing what they can to banish the gospel and with it the christian religion from the land? do not many who pretend to literature, prefer the philosophy of Greece and Rome to the philosophy of Jesus? and the writings of Tacitus, Livy, Homer and Virgil, to the Bible? while many, who profess to believe the gospel, corrupt its principles and dishonour it in their practice. The gospel is the butt of the enmity and opposition of all men except a few. All things on earth conspire to prevent its taking root where it is not, and to tear it from the place where it is. It is a wonder, it is not quite banished from the world; and were it not for the divine mercy and power, this would soon be the case. This singular remark may be made concerning the bible, that there is no other book in the world, which all men have conspired to render useless as they have it; which, considering the depravity of human nature, is no obscure proof that it is of God. A very great majority of Christians so called, from a principle of pretended reverence for it, think it ought to be secreted from the people; the Roman Catholics think it is too holy

holy to be touched by the profane vulgar. Many who do not espouse that principle, let it lye by neglected in their houses, while learned deists and profane mockers, from age to age, are writing and speaking reproachfully of it. Would not God be just in giving up such men to their own hearts lusts, and in allowing them to return to their beloved regions of heathen darkness? would it be injustice in God to swear in his wrath, concerning all the deists and neglectors of religion in Philadelphia and elsewhere? you shall never be permitted again to see the bible, nor to observe one sabbath; nor celebrate one sacrament; nor present one prayer to me; neither you nor your posterity. Could or would these men complain? would they not obtain their hearts wish? It is certain many in effect pass this sentence against themselves and fix the same doom as far as in their power on their posterity. It is clear, the conduct of nations in these affairs and indeed of the heads of families in an inferior degree, must always involve the fate of their posterity. The consequences of their conduct must unavoidably descend to their children. For instance, does the parent of a family practise no religious worship in his house; it is more than probable his children will copy after his example; and when they become parents, each of them will set the same pattern of infidelity before their children; and these again in their turn before theirs. And thus one irreligious parent begins the current, which widens, deepens, and rolls on like a great river of death; spreading desolation wherever it goes, and never ends, 'till swallowed up in the dead sea of eternal perdition. This should make the primores regni the chiefs of a nation, and heads of families, extremely cautious and circumspect in such matters; because they reject and forfeit not only for themselves; but also for their posterity; and it is manifest great revolutions in nations cannot take place easily or in one day.

It may be not improperly added here, that the gospel has been frequently offered to the Indian tribes in this country. Have they discovered a propensity to accept it? or rather have they not very generally rejected it? and have not deists and profane christians hardened them against it? We are apt to find fault with divine providence, when the blame lies entirely at our own door. How shocking and tremendous after all this—after all men, except a few, are thus acting in harmony and concert, to render the gospel abortive or unsuccessful in this world, yea to banish it from the world, by the pride, enmity, atheism and other lusts of their own hearts; to hear them pre-
tending

tending to such benevolence to mankind, as to plead, there must be a dispensation of the gospel in hell; and that otherwise God would be cruel and unjust! Were it really to be so, and these men retaining the same temper there as here, they would devise means to render it abortive there too. But such perverse reasoning is so wicked, that the mind of man cannot conceive it. Language fails to give it utterance. It is a full proof, that the heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. Justice, strict and personal justice then, does not require the salvation even of true believers. It would not be injustice in Christ to cast them into hell for their sins and punish them eternally. Their ill desert is not and cannot be taken away; nor is his merit so imputed to them as to become their personal merit, or to make them personally as righteous as he is. This cannot be in the nature of things. But while their ill desert remains, his merit is sustained in law as the ground or reason of their eternal salvation. Justice, it is true, does not forbid their salvation, every obstacle from that quarter is removed by the atonement and righteousness of Christ. It is consistent enough with the glory of God, the honour of his law and government, to save them; but their salvation is an act of rich grace and mere mercy; and this grace requires it, and God's faithful promise secures it. Were any thing more necessary to be added, we might subjoin, that general or public, not strict distributive justice, makes their salvation necessary.

On what shadow of sound reasoning then, can it be pleaded, that justice, strict justice requires the salvation of those who despise Jesus Christ; who reject the councils of God against their own souls; who trample under foot his precious blood and do despite to the spirit of grace; who force their way to hell, taking their posterity with them, against gospel light! gospel grace and mercy! Justice require their salvation!! Justice in every sense require their damnation. Distributive justice demands it! public justice demands it! spurned love, despised blood, affronted mercy demand it! and the word of God declares it shall be infallibly executed.

The design of God the Father, in committing the administration of affairs in this world to Jesus Christ the mediator and his Eternal Son, seems to be, that the son might subdue all things to himself, or bring all things which the sin and rebellion of angels and men had thrown into the greatest disorder, back again under the dominion of law and justice. This is not
obscurely

obscurely pointed forth by the Apostle, 1 Corinth. 15—24—28. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet, and when all things shall be subdued unto him, &c. The apostle evidently refers unto that notable passage in the 110 Psalm. Sit thou at my right hand, says the eternal Father to his beloved Son, until I make thine enemies thy footstool; which may be thus paraphrased, I give unto thee my son, all power in heaven and earth, and invest thee with the full and absolute administration of affairs in my kingdom, until I by thy agency have put all rebellion down, reduced all things back again under the dominion of law and justice, or put all mine and thine enemies under thy feet; and then shalt thou deliver up the kingdom to me without any thing to hurt or offend in it, every such thing being cast out.

It appears to have been a common saying among the Jews that the Messiah when he cometh will restore all things. There are two ways in which Christ carries this design into execution and will finally accomplish it. The first is by a work of grace on true believers; by which their minds are enlightened in the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; see the infinite evil of sin, are brought to hate it with a perfect hatred and turn from it with full purpose of heart and endeavour after new obedience; voluntarily submit themselves to the infinite mercy of God, as it reigns through the atonement; acquiesce, cordially acquiesce in the divine law as holy, just and good both in precept and penalty; become reconciled to God's perfections, God's providence and God's moral government. Persons of this description shall be eternally saved. Their salvation commences in this life, it begins in their saving conversion to God, in the remission of their sins, the adoption of their persons, and acceptance of their feeble imperfect but sincere services. They are preserved in Christ Jesus and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their whole dependence is placed on the grace of God in Christ, and to that and that alone they will ascribe all the glory of it through all eternity. But there is another class and a very numerous one too, who know not God nor obey the gospel of his Son, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

They

They shut their eyes against the light here, but will lift them up in hell being in torment ; and an impassable gulph will be fixed between believers and them. They would not know nor believe, under the administration of the gospel, that God infinitely hates sin and will certainly punish it ; but will and must know it, to their eternal cost under the ministration of wrath. They, by the pride of their hearts, rejected free justification through the righteousness of Christ, spurned his love, despised his blood and did despite to his spirit of grace. They adhered to the law, trusted to their own righteousness, ventured down the stream of life and launched into the ocean of eternity on that plank. All their life long they persisted in appealing to the law, and to the law they must go, and by it be judged at the tribunal of God. Their pretended religion and virtue were put in the Saviour's place, and exalted to his throne to the utter rejection of the gospel and of law and justice likewise. Will God acquit such at his bar ? will he clear the guilty ? will he overthrow his glorious gospel and his holy law both at once ? will he justify sinners as they do themselves ? on account of what ? righteousness ? no ; but wickedness. For what greater wickedness can be imagined, than to reject the counsels of infinite wisdom and infinite love ? what greater wickedness than while they do this, to attempt to answer the demands of the law by their own imperfect and polluted fragments of imaginary merit ? while it is certain they never performed one duty from proper principles, holy motives, nor directed it to a reasonable and proper end, the glory of their creator. Christ will put such down ; will put them under his feet, will cast them forth into utter darkness and eternal perdition. They will be subdued under law and justice indeed, but it will be by their suffering the penalty and enduring the curse of the law. Darkness and despair will enclose them round. And they will be involved in a dreadful moral necessity of sinning and suffering still more and more, but in such a manner as not any longer to spread the infection of sin, and disturb the order of the kingdom of peace and righteousness. This moral necessity will consist in an unconquerable aversion of the heart from God and enmity against him ; which is the true spiritual idea of spiritual or moral death ; and this death will eternally have dominion over them.

It is certainly a part of our authors scheme, though they do not speak it out, that there will be a dispensation of the gospel in hell, there the throne of grace will be erected ; the mercy-seat

feat revealed; that men shall enter on a second probationary state after death; and perhaps some go through ten or ten thousand such probations. Is not this altogether visionary? what foundation in God's word for such a notion? the bible says *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. *To day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin: but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that he hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. There is a sin unto death, says John, I do not say that ye shall pray for it. The apostle judged it would be displeasing to God, to pray for some men even in this life. But if the scheme of our innovators be true, there is no impropriety in praying for all the damned in hell; that God would sanctify their torments to their purification; that he would mitigate and shorten them as much as possible. How shocking is error!

Our authors tell us, that the wicked shall be purified in hell and so fitted for heaven. Here they acknowledge, that in hell they must be in a sinful and morally depraved state, at least for a considerable time; that is, until the force of hell-fire purge off their impurity; and also, that the inhabitants of glory must be in a state perfectly holy and pure; and that the impure cannot join the society of the pure and holy, until they be cleansed and purified. Indeed this is so well supported

ported in scripture and so consonant to reason, that it could not well be denied. Now here the question is, what shall be the efficient cause of their purification? who shall be the agent in this business? we can think only of two or three, one or other of which it must be; either the spirit of God; or hell-fire; or themselves. The scriptures ascribe soul purification entirely and only to the spirit of grace. Except a man be born of the spirit, says Christ, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord. If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. It is true the operations of the spirit in soul-purification are compared, to the operation and efficacy of water and fire to cleanse and purge material filth from material subjects: but these are only emblems; the one referring to baptism, which is only an outward sign of moral purification; as when he says except ye be born of the water and of the spirit, &c. corresponding with another text, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. In the other emblem, to wit, fire, there is an allusion to Isaiah 6—6. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said; lo! this hath touched thy lips, &c. accordingly John the baptist assures the disciples of the Lord that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost as with fire. This evidently had its accomplishment, when the holy Spirit descended on them at pentecost in the shape of cloven tongues of fire. By this spirit their hearts were inflamed with love and holy zeal, and the miraculous power of speaking all languages was communicated to them. The prophet and they were fitted and qualified, for the execution of their offices, by the spirit of Christ. By his divine influence they were purified from sin, animated with love and holy zeal, their tongues tipped with heavenly fire and made like flaming torches to dispense light and warm life through the churches of God. And it is remarkable, that Christ when delivering this promise after his resurrection, drops the emblem of fire, and only says, ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, Acts I. If then we ascribe the purification of the damn'd in hell to the agency of the spirit of grace; God's gracious presence must be in hell, which would turn hell into heaven; and on this supposition, that word is
not

not true, depart ye cursed, &c. nor that, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the *presence* of the Lord, &c. 2 Thes. 1--9. nor that word, my spirit shall not always strive with man; that prayer is vain, cast me not away from thy presence, nor take thy holy spirit from me, Psalm 51. these exhortations have no meaning, grieve not the spirit, quench not the spirit, resist not the spirit. It follows, that if God's word be true, we cannot ascribe the purification of the damned to the sole agent in soul-purification; the spirit of grace. Their purification must therefore be ascribed to the torments of hell alone. But how absurd the idea! that mere torment or punishment will conciliate love to the punisher. What is soul-purification? it is holiness. What is holiness? it is conformity to the law of God. What is conformity to the law of God? it is love. For Christ sums up the whole law in these two, supreme love to God and love to our neighbour as to ourselves. But it is love that begets love. We love him because he first loved us. Mere torment will never beget love. Some raving advocates for the doctrine against which we contend, drop in their argument, the idea of spiritual or moral purification; and substitute in its place, the purification of body or matter; and tell us that fire and brimstone constitute a fine chynical preparation for this purpose. But this drollery and nonsense is too profound, to merit a serious answer. It is certain that devils have not bodies of clay. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, says Christ. Besides, fire and brimstone; the lake of fire; are figurative expressions, pointing forth the poignancy of the torments of the damned: as on the contrary, the felicity of heaven is pointed out by a throne, a crown, a river of life and a tree of life. The best scriptural idea of these torments, which we can form, is, that they consist in anguish, horror, despair, rage, enmity and fury. And how these torments will transform the soul into love is not easy to see. It is certain that these are the torments of such as are made signal monuments of divine wrath in this life. Here permit me to introduce a story from my own personal knowledge, the truth of which I can avouch by the testimony of scores of living witnesses. There lived in the state of New-York, a few years ago, a sensible intelligent man, whose name it is proper to conceal. He with some others, laid a plot to massacre a number of indians, who during the former war between Britain and France, retreated into the settlements of the white people, as being

peaceably disposed towards the colonies. The wicked men did this under the pretext of these Indians holding a correspondence with their brethren at war. He and his club having prepared themselves with strong drink, for the execution of the infernal project, went in the night and barbarously murdered the most of the poor savages. The blasting curse of God visibly fell upon the persons or property of the whole bloody band. The man of whom I speak after some time took up with a woman of indifferent fame, said he was married to her, and had several children by her. It was whispered among the people, that they were not married. He said they were, and threatened to prosecute at law any who would affirm the contrary. But the suspicion was so strong, that he could not get baptism to his children. He told me himself, that he then determined to baptize them himself; and, says he, as I felt some horror at the thoughts of doing it; I made myself drunk for the purpose, and went through with it; baptizing them in the name of the Trinity. Then, added he, my trouble was completed. The spirit of God entirely forsook me. I have committed the sin unto death; there is no mercy for me, and I wish for none, yea says he, I wish for none. Soon after he had done the last shocking deed; he parted from his woman; bound out his children; and he told me, that one day in a fit of raging despair, when reflecting on his coveting earthly things and what that and other lusts had brought him to. He took a parcel of paper money, went and stamped it in a swamp. But O! the livid horrors which disfigured his countenance! he was strong, healthy, intelligent and a good scholar; but soon became pale, meagre, haggard, wild in his looks, with his hair bristling out. He would repeat many terrible words from the bible against himself, and tell me, hell was his eternal portion. I endeavoured to comfort him with the consolations of the gospel, preached to him, prayed for him, and exhorted him to pray for himself, but in vain! He often attempted to murder himself! and frequently, in the most serious manner, put the question to me, whether it were not better for him to do so, and go to hell at once, to know the worst, than to live in his present condition? from which I earnestly dissuaded him. He would sometimes blaspheme! curse God! and wish he were more powerful than he! he spent his time in whittling sticks, &c. and would lift up his knife, stab it into the mantle piece, and say, O! if that were G—! I once took him aside and urged him
much

much to attempt to pray, with long entreaty I prevailed. He fell upon his knees, uttered a few words, started up in horror, and said, I cannot pray! When the late war began, he enlisted in the troops that went to Canada, Anno 1775. The last words he uttered to me when I bid him farewell at parting, were, I wish a bullet may pierce through my heart! and he nearly got his wish! at the siege of Quebec, when the continental soldiers had erected breast works of ice against the wall of Quebec, and the firing began, though he did not belong to the train of artillery, against the advice of Capt. M——, a worthy officer who told it to me himself, he would go to the breast works, where a cannon ball from the city took his head, and scattered his brains and blood on the ground. This is a specimen only in this life, of the effects of torment on the human mind. And surely we may say it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! If it be said the damned will purify themselves by their own exertions; it may be answered, this is more than any could do in this life, with all the assistance of the means of grace and common operations of the spirit. We are not sufficient of ourselves says Paul to think any thing as of ourselves. The changing of the whole frame and texture of our spiritual and moral nature, is a greater and more difficult work of power, than the creation of the sun, moon and stars. Can any person force himself to love what by nature he hates? Can the Ethiopian change his colour, or the Leopard his spots? no more can they that are accustomed to wickedness do that which is good. If men in hell can by their own power return to God, they are not so far from him there as here; and on this supposition, there was no necessity for the blood of Christ, or the mission of the spirit to bring them to God. Moreover, the word of God teaches, that at the day of judgment the mediatorial scheme will be finished, and the mediatorial

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kingdom

* *In the picture of the above mentioned unhappy man the colouring is not too light on the contrary it does not come up to the life; there are several facts which I do not chuse to mention; and the truth of my information can be attested by many living witnesses. Some will say, the man was mad or delirious and under some bodily indisposition. I believe indeed he was delirious under the insupportable weight of the wrath of God; mad in much the same manner as the damned in hell are, though in a far inferior degree. He was otherwise intelligent sensible and made a good regular and obedient soldier.*

kingdom delivered up to the Father ; that God may be all in all ; let us compare here, Matth. 13—39, and Matth. 24—28, with 1 Corinth. 15—24. The harvest is the end of the world ; this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. The kingdom to be delivered up must be the mediatorial kingdom ; the delivering it up must mean his finishing the scheme of grace ; the end, when it shall be finished, is the day of judgment ; consequently, if any be saved after that, it must be by another Saviour than Jesus Christ, and by another redemption than his atonement. The unavoidable consequence is, that the damned must make an atonement for their sins, by their own sufferings, and on this supposition, there was no need for the atonement and satisfaction of Christ at all. For if after a man has spent his life in sin, aggravating his transgression all the time, by resisting the light, and rejecting Christ and his atonement, he can make satisfaction for all his sins, and for the rejection of Christ too the greatest of them all ; much more might he have made a sufficient atonement, by his own sufferings, if Christ had never come at all. It is clear, if Christ had never come in the flesh nor suffered, men would never have been guilty of the most aggravated sin they can commit, viz. the rejecting of this gift of God and trampling on his divine blood, and so would have had infinitely less to satisfy for, than they now have, who live and die rejecting him ; and if by passing some time in hell, they can satisfy for all this aggravated guilt, much more might they, if they had never contracted this last and greatest guilt. Thus, if Christ had never come in the flesh, nor died for sinners, not only would the salvation of all men have been very possible ; but the salvation of many, of all the damn'd at least, would have been much more easily attainable by their own sufferings, than it can be in their present circumstances. What necessity then for the sufferings and death of the Son of God ? what advantage by it ? or rather is not the disadvantage arising from it very great, at least to many, as only aggravating their guilt and doubling their punishment. It cannot be said that the Saviour hath procured this by his satisfaction, that the sinners own atonement for all his sins, that of rejecting him among others might become more easy. It is clear there is no such idea held forth in the scriptures, but the

the contrary is declared in the strongest language, that the rejection of his atonement will infinitely aggravate the guilt and punishment of the rejectors; and on this hypothesis the mediatorial scheme will not be finished, nor the mediatorial kingdom delivered up at the day of judgment, which we are assured it will be. Besides if there be an infinite sufficiency in the atonement of Christ, and if it be available to salvation whether accepted or rejected, why demand any more at all of the sinner? but if it be said that Christ atoned for all our sins, except that of rejecting him, and that we must satisfy by our own sufferings for that; then it will follow that our sufferings must be equally meritorious as the sufferings of Christ, if not more so; for surely there is more guilt, ingratitude, enmity and baseness, in spurning redeeming blood, and trampling on redeeming blood, through all our life, than in all our other sins. By other sins men reject the authority of God; but by this they not only reject the authority which commands them to believe in his Son, but also pour contempt on infinite love and mercy; and the rejection of the saviour prevents their sanctification and is at the bottom of all other sins; at most a little longer continuance in hell would have done the business, without the incarnation and satisfaction of Christ. How tremendous is the precipice of error!

The truth is, a gift rejected can avail us nothing, unless to aggravate our guilt. If Christ's atonement be finally rejected we can receive no benefit by it; and this is the uniform language of God's word. He that believeth shall be saved: He that believeth not shall be damned. Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But the fearful and the unbelieving, and all liars, shall have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. Which Christ explains thus, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. But the doctrine we oppose gives the lie to all this and repeats the old temptation, ye shall not surely die. In fine, on this absurd scheme of principles, we may ask, what meaning in the peculiar doctrines of the gospel? It seems to unhinge the whole. What sense in the doctrine of election? what in the doctrine of regeneration? Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you shall seek to enter and shall not be able. What meaning in the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ? Why does our Lord say, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. What

sense in the doctrine of the sin unto death, or the unpardonable sin? What in these texts, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins. The prophet Daniel states the separation between the righteous and the wicked, Dan. 12—2, And many of them that sleep in the dust, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. The Prince of prophets confirms his servant's declaration, Matth. 25—31—46. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left; and he shall say unto them on his right hand: come ye blessed, &c. and to them on the left, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, &c. the solemn scene closes with these words: and these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. Here is a final separation made; do we ever hear of their coming together again? Here are two parallel lines, and both drawn out into eternity by Jehovah himself. Is it possible they can ever meet? mathematicians tell us of lines which may eternally approximate and yet never meet; but these modern divines tell us of a greater paradox; two lines which never approximate and yet shall meet.

Much more might be said in opposition to this dangerous doctrine, but as others have opposed it with much good sense and strength of reasoning; I have thought proper to contribute only this mite. I am persuaded the authors are on ground infinitely dangerous, and they have much need to pause and consider; least while they pretend to exalt the divine mercy; they be found attempting to sully Jehovah's character; overturn his throne; subvert his moral government; stain his holiness and dishonour his justice. Do not they make the God of truth a liar? the oath of God a nullity? for he has sworn in his wrath that unbelievers shall never enter into his rest. The God of infinite purity a tolerator of sin? the God of order the author of confusion? Nay the scheme tends to the annihilation of all moral rectitude in God, angels and men. And as it is infinitely soothing and flattering to the lusts and corruptions of men; no question, but its promoters will meet with success. Deistical principles prevail much already; and this doctrine is calculated to give them greater force and a wider range. For men of such principles will naturally ask, can these preachers believe the Bible, when they so earnestly propagate what has
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so little countenance from it ? yea is so opposite to it. In fine, the doctrine has had its rise, it will run its course, and must have its fall, and none who wish the prosperity of the church, need be over much concerned. Heresies must needs come, that those who are approved may be made manifest. None of Christ's sheep can be lost. The church is built on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

There is one manifest defect in the new scheme. Its authors are very silent about the eternal fate of the fallen angels. They say nothing at all about them. But it is evident, that on their principles of benevolence in the deity, and the injustice of eternal punishment; it would be equally inconsistent to damn them to eternal sufferings : as the wicked among men : yea, more so ; as they have never been guilty of rejecting a Saviour offered to them. And if men can atone for all *their* aggravated guilt by their own sufferings, much more may the devils for *theirs*.

The existence of moral evil under the government of an infinitely good God is a mystery; that it does exist is unquestionable. But how it came to exist is a dark question; doubtless it is the consequence of free agency in rational creatures; and must originate in an abuse of their liberty. But it is manifest that God dwells and reigns in the midst of this thick darkness; he sustains the majesty of his government, notwithstanding the tendency of sin to drive it to ruin; this he does by inflicting the penalty of his law on transgressors. It is certain that in the eternal state, holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, will still be rational, free and moral agents. They will indeed be unchangeably fixed in a state of perfect holiness; but in such a manner, as will be consistent with freedom. They will not be fixed as in a frost. They will be eternally free agents. But a free agent must be governed by motives; which present him a free choice. The eternal punishments of devils and wicked men may therefore touch some wheel and produce some effect in the divine government, of which we are not aware. They may tend to give eternal energy to the divine administration. The glorified may be kept immutably in a holy state, by clear views of the glory of the divine nature; the beauty of holiness; the inflexibility of divine justice displayed in the eternal punishment of sin. But indeed this subject is too far from our reach. In all this argument, I have said little about the infinite evil of sin. It is not easy to fix the
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idea of any thing infinite in the finite mind of man, and therefore reasoning deduced from it, does not strike with such conviction. It is certain however, that several things afford ground to form this idea of it. It is said, Job 22—5, Is not thy wickedness great and thine iniquities infinite? Sin is the rejection of an infinite good, God himself. It is rebellion against an infinite sovereign; and were it as powerful as it is sinful, it would cast down his throne and annihilate his being and perfections; for as the sinner will not regard the authority of the lawgiver, we are sure he would not suffer the penalty, if he could resist, the consequence is, an end would be put to the divine government. And God must hate sin with an infinite hatred, and must manifest this hatred in an infinite manner; and accordingly in the room of all the redeemed, an infinite surety was appointed, and an infinite atonement exacted. By which atonement, all who accept it, are saved with an infinite salvation; and therefore reason would say, those who reject it, must perish with an infinite or everlasting destruction; but on this I do not insist.

I shall conclude the whole, with a short address to those who have embraced the universal scheme. I have no hopes of making any impressions on the teachers of it. Their pride, their honour, their fame, their interest, which are powerful springs of action in the human heart, are all combined against me; and will probably not cease to operate, until they have finished the scene. But possibly something may be done with their followers.

My poor deluded brethren; it behoves you to consider well the ground on which you stand. It is a matter of infinite importance to your own souls, and the souls of others: to your own souls; how dreadful to go down to the grave with a lie in your right hand! how terrible to meet God at the judgment seat in a state of war against the truths of his word, against his sovereignty, his government, his justice, mercy, goodness truth and holiness! his law and gospel both! will you venture to appear at his awful bar, and call him a liar to his face! To the souls of others; your principles and conduct must in the nature of things spread the infection among others, and some of you are not a little zealous to propagate the scheme. My soul trembles for and sincerely pities the case of your poor children in particular. It will be a miracle of mercy indeed if they be not overwhelmed in the delusion. Consider, I beseech

befeech you, confider well, what you are about. What if the blood of your children and of many others, whom you have tempted to make shipwreck of faith and a good confcience, fhould be required at your hands. It was a faying of Luther, the eminent German Reformer, to whose exertions in the caufe of God the whole world is indebted ; that Satan will never be at reft for the good word's fake. For a long time, he endeavoured to deftroy the church by perfecution ; but was fruftrated in his attempt, for the blood of the faints was the feed of the church. Now fince the rights of mankind have been better underftood, and perfecution has in a great meafure ceafed throughout the nations ; he endeavours to work the ruin of Chrift's kingdom by odious and monftrous errors. We might have argued *a priori* or before it happened, that this would be the cafe. Facts confirm it. He is a mafter in the arts of deception. Has the knowledge of an angel, the policy of a devil and the skill of a practitioner. What a pity that profefors of religion fhould be deceived through his fubtilties and devices.

When I fee you running after every new projector in religion, methinks I behold you greedily fipping the poifon of afps and the venom of dragons. I do not mean by this remark to preclude free inquiry, but there is an infinite difference between free enquiry and fcepticifm. You ought not to be like children toffed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftinefs of men whereby they lye in wait to deceive ; ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. Only think from the inftance of the poor frantick Shakers how far a fpirit of delufion may carry men ! think of the nonfence, wherewith the common fenfe and underftandings of mankind, were for a confiderable time abufed and infulted by one of the prime promoters of the doctrine ; namely that in hell fin fhould be punifhed, but not the finner : as if the act could be feparated from the agent in this cafe : or as if the law of the ftate could punifh murder while the murderer efaped with impunity. Think of the mad blafphemous pretentions of I-m--m--h W-----n ; and yet ſhe has her followers. An enemy is doing thefe things. Satan is fowing tares in God's field. Let not a falfe pretence to benovolence, to liberality of fentiment, a fondnefs for fingularity and pride of underftanding, carry you down the ftream and over the dafhing falls, the rocks and precipices of error and delufion. Chrift will never lofe his church ; but you may be loft. Do

not say it is a small matter and of little consequence what your opinions be in religion, providing your practice be good. It cannot be a matter of indifference whether you think as God thinks; whether the same mind be in you, which is in Christ Jesus; whether you have heard and learned of the Father or not; whether you be taught by the spirit of God or the spirit of error; whether you have communion with God and glorified Spirits and the Saints of God on earth, in the truth; or not; whether you grieve the hearts of God's children or not. You do not yet see whither the doctrine leads you. The mask is not thrown off. You may be under the restraint of former and better principles. A regard to the good opinion of those who differ from you; an ardent desire to advance the schemes may make you apparently virtuous and religious. But the doctrine does undoubtedly lead to dissipation. It saps the foundations of religion and morality.

Its purport is plainly this, let men live as they please, without any regard to the divine law or gospel; they must be saved: otherwise God would be cruel and unjust. That is, creatures must be totally independent of their creator. All regard to his will, all respect to his authority in the law and his grace in the gospel must be drop't and yet they saved. Sinful worms must be as Gods. They wish for salvation in sin not from it. But salvation is nothing else than reducing the rebel back to a cordial subordination to the will of God, and pardoning his rebellion, consistently with the honour of the law-giver, obligation of his law and support of his government. And were your doctrine universally embraced, it would produce fearfull effects on society. The language of men would be; come, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. I heartily wish you may be recovered from the snare of satan,
AMEN.

☞ I have given my sentiments freely upon the subject, treated of above, under a deep sense of my inability to handle it as it deserves. If any will candidly convince me of any error or mistake, I will thank them, and readily give it up. I have often declared my mind, in detached thoughts from the pulpit, on the subject, in New-England and elsewhere; and humbly think the ministers of Christ from a regard.

gard to the interests of civil society as well as the eternal salvation of perishing souls; a regard both to the present and future generations, ought faithfully to exert themselves against the common enemy. If any erroneous sentiment should be found in this performance; I alone am accountable for it; as no man living saw the piece before it went to the Press. And if it should be acceptable to the church of Christ and obtain the dear Redeemer's blessing to do any good; I purpose a second small piece, in which I will answer the objections of the votaries of the universal doctrine and wrest from their hands the texts of scripture by the perversion of which they attempt to build up their Babel.



B R R A T A.

Page 20. line 11 from the bottom, in some copies for required read require and line 10 for require read requires. Page 22. line 5 for spiritual read scriptural.

The connexion stated between Civil Government and religion.

CIVIL magistracy is unquestionably an ordinance of God. And it is also called an ordinance of man; because though God has instituted government and order among men: yet he hath left the particular form altogether free to the choice of nations. The institution, without doubt, proceeds from God as the creator and moral governor of the world. Dominion is not founded on grace. Jesus Christ is indeed given to be head over all things for the good of his body the church; and all power is given to him in heaven and earth. But this will not infer, that magistracy is an ordinance of Christ as mediator; or that it proceeds from him in that character; no more than the subordination of angels to him as his ministers; and the subjection of the elements to his power, will infer, that these were created by him as mediator. Magistracy has its foundation not in the grace of the gospel; but in the law and light of nature. Its end is not the eternal salvation of men, but the preservation of order among them in this world. Its rewards and punishments do not extend to the life to come, but are confined to this. Nevertheless we believe, that being an ordinance of God, it must bear a relation to him, and ought to be applied to his glory. And civil government being moral government, it must have its foundation in moral sentiments; which moral sentiments constitute natural religion: and as the christian religion contains all the principles of natural religion and makes many valuable additions to them; though we cannot affirm, that the knowledge of what is peculiar to it, is necessary to the being of civil government, yet it conduces much to its well-being. Civil communities and their rulers, will therefore find, that to cultivate moral sentiments, or promote the practice of virtue, which is founded on the knowledge and fear of God, is essentially necessary to the preservation of government among them. And communities made up altogether, or chiefly, of Christians will find, that the encouragement and promotion of the christian religion, by the body of the people and their rulers, as far as is competent to them even in their civil capacities, will infinitely conduce to their interest and advantage in this life, or to the purposes of peace, order and good government among them.

It is natural for erring mortals to run into extremes. While some of our worthy ancestors gave perhaps too much power to the civil magistrate about religion ; some in our days, to shun that extreme, seem to have run into the opposite. They teach, that the magistrate as such, has nothing to do with it, and there is the greatest reason to believe, that, what many among us understand by liberty of conscience in religion, is a liberty, utterly to disregard all religion and cast off all conscience. This too plainly appears from the practice of many, from the neglect of religion in our civil constitutions and laws ; and the inattention of magistrates to put in force the inadequate and feeble laws which have been enacted against irreligion, profanity and vice. But surely there must be a wide difference between these two. Liberty of conscience supposes conscience to exist, conscience of duty both towards God and man. But without a sense of religion and moral excellence, it cannot exist ; without the knowledge of these, we should be as void of conscience as the inhabitants of the forest. To grant liberty of conscience then is one thing, and to pursue such a line of conduct, as tends to annihilate all conscience, is something very different.

In order to a clear discussion of this important subject, it will be necessary to explain the term religion, and then state the question with precision. By religion in this question, we mean, a belief of the existence of God, some competent degree of knowledge of his nature and perfections ; of our entire dependence on him ; that we must be accountable to him for our conduct ; a belief of his providence ; and that he is the avenger of the wicked and rewarder of the good ; that he is essentially holy, just and good ; that if the wicked escape the judgment of man, they cannot escape the judgment of God ; or if they should escape his righteous judgment in this life, they will not in the life to come. But a secret belief of these things will not answer the purpose, it must be visible to society in some way or other. Therefore there must be in religion a visible profession of this belief, a confession of the name of God, a reverence and fear of his divine majesty, and all this expressed in worshipping him, in that form which is most agreeable to the worshipper's conscience.

The question then is not, whether the magistrate ought to assume the power of managing the internal government of the

church of Christ? or meddle with the internal order of any religious society? This all men will readily grant would be improper. Nor, 2dly is it, whether full liberty as to modes and forms of worship, or even principles of doctrine which do not sap the foundation of good order in civil society ought to be allowed? this is readily granted. Nor, 3dly is it, whether the magistrate may act in this business *ex arbitrio*, or by his mere will and pleasure without the consent of the subjects or a majority of them, forcing on them by his sole authority, religion and the modes of it? It is certain the civil magistrate has no legal power to do so; and it is equally true, that in this sense, he has no legal power to do any thing. His authority is delegated. He is the servant of the public. His authority is derived from the grant, consent, or previous compact of the people. But the question is, what may the community at large do? what stipulations and conditions may they lawfully fix on in their compact with each other and their magistrates? may they neglect religion altogether? or may they not provide for the security and practice thereof? and if they may, is it not the duty of their magistrates in the administration of government to see these stipulations and conditions fulfilled, or in other words to see the laws in favour of religion and virtue executed? we affirm they may and ought so to do; and to maintain the contrary, is to found civil government, not indeed on heathenism, the foundation is not so good as that; but on absolute atheism, It would place it intirely independent of God.

The very nature of the civil compact shews religion in the sense above defined to be necessary to its formation; for without it men can place no confidence in each other; without it there can be no faith among them. This compact is a sacred covenant between the members of the community and between the whole community and their magistrates, in which they solemnly engage to be faithful to each other, to submit to wholesome laws agreed on by the whole, and support their magistrates in the execution of these laws; while their rulers with equal solemnity engage to execute them: and though the covenant be chiefly about secular or temporal interests; yet a sense of the obligation to fulfill it must arise from religion. In such a covenant God is called to witness their sincerity, either explicitly or implicitly; and to be the avenger of such as perfidiously break it. No doubt the state engages to punish the violation of the compact; but whence arises the obligation on
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them to do so? and what ground of confidence in them that they will do so? surely a sense of the authority of God obliging them, is the origin of this. If it be said, that a sense of common danger will oblige them. We answer a sense of common danger will make a herd of swine stand in defence of each other. But men are superior in nature to swine, and must be governed by higher motives; besides, previously to the social compact, the members might have kept themselves free, or in a state of nature; and after it is formed they may return to that state, on occasion of every little difficulty, or imagined severity; unless they have some sense of the obligation of their plighted faith in the compact, which sense must originate in the knowledge and fear of God.

2. I argue the point from the nature of man. Man is a rational, a free and moral agent. There is a kind of society among many of the brutal tribes. Herds of sheep and oxen run into society, whisthey do merely by a blind instinct. God sees meet to govern and rule them in that manner and it is agreeable to their nature; but man is possessed of a higher nature. He is a rational and voluntary agent. A society of men then ought not to be formed on the same principles as a society of brutes, not from a principle of blind instinct, nor merely from a sense of common danger, but from a perception of the authority of God, a discernment of the divine institution, and a regard to the honour and glory of God and the good of mankind. A rational and moral agent must be actuated by motives, and these motives must be rational or adapted to the dignity of his nature: and to move him to form society and perform the duties of the social union; no motives are truly so; but those above mentioned; all which necessarily involves the knowledge fear and worship of God. Some moral philosophers have called man a religious animal, and tell us this is his principal distinction from the brutal tribes and chief superiority above them. Must they not then proceed ignorantly and erroneously, who would propose to form or preserve a society of these creatures, without any regard to religion. Supposing a number of men, accidentally meeting on an uninhabited island, and about to form themselves into a body politic; they necessarily behoved to fix on some religious and moral principles, as the basis of the social union among them; for without this, as has been said in the former argument, there could be no faith among them, no trust or confidence in each other. If religious and moral prin-

principles be necessary to the formation of society, they are equally necessary to its preservation, and without a steady regard to them no society can subsist.

3. The affirmative of the question may be argued from the nature of civil government. Civil government is certainly moral government, and by it God carries on his moral government of the world. The rule of this government is the moral law or the law of God; for let men diversify their laws as they please, they must coincide with the divine law. They cannot contradict it without contradicting the eternal and immutable principles of equity and justice. The variety of laws among men calculated for the good of society (and they have no moral power to make any other) is no more than the application of the divine law to the infinite variety of circumstances in society. The authority which obliges to obedience, does not originate only in the consent or compact of society, but in a source infinitely higher, the will of the supreme governor. God who created man a rational and moral agent, under the obligation of his laws, also formed him a social being. He made him with a strong propensity to society, and mutual wants and necessities strenghten this principle, and urge men into society. One of the strongest propensities in human nature, the inclination of the two sexes to each other, is the first attracting power, and lays the foundation of the social union. But men are bound to yield to this propensity, not by blind instinct as the brutes; but by a moral obligation, the authority of God: and to perform the duties resulting from that relation, and indeed all the other duties of the social union, by the same authority. He who gave laws to men as individuals, also gave laws to societies of men. And indeed it is only in a state of society, that the chief part of the divine law can have practically any place, or that there can be any scope for the performance of what it requires.

4. We argue the point from the character given to civil rulers. They are not mere creatures of the state, but ministers of God for good, as the apostle calls them. Civil rulers are improperly stiled legislators or lawgivers. The supreme God is the lawgiver to men. And they are but ministers of his law: and must be accountable to him for their conduct; he is king of kings and Lord of Lords. Daniel says to Belshazzar, the God in whose hand is thy breath, and whose are all thy ways, that is, to whom thou must be accountable for them all, hast thou
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not glorified. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. None can deny, that all the duties of the civil or social union are moral duties, which affect the conscience and oblige it. But who has a right to rule the conscience? not any civil state, but God only. Who is the Lord of conscience not the state but God. If the laws of a state should in any instance contradict the laws of God they have no moral obligation; no man is bound to obey for conscience sake. But it is an unspeakable mercy, that the precepts of moral duty between man and man, are generally so clear, and every man has got such a legible copy of them on his heart; that states in a general way will not, if honestly aiming at truth and equity, go far wrong in the application of them. At any rate if civil rulers pretend to rule rational and conscientious beings, if they would act in a higher character, than herdmen ruling over so many cattle. All that they can in reason pretend to; is to administer and apply the divine law; and act as ministers under God the supreme Lord of conscience. And to place civil government independent of God and religion; is either to divest men of reason and conscience, and so make them brutes: or it is to make the state, or magistrate of the state, the Lord of conscience; and the law of the state the only rule of conscience.

5. We argue it from the necessity and use of oaths in civil society. It is manifest that when men enter into compact with and swear to be faithful to each other. It is by the name of God they swear. Thus princes bind themselves to their subjects and subjects to their princes. We cannot have a marriage; nor a governor; a barrister; a juryman; nor a witness in a court; without a solemn appeal to the deity. An oath is for confirmation and puts an end to all strife. It is absurd to say, that this is only an artificial mode of forming and sustaining society invented by men; and that the only object of terror is the punishment appointed by the state to the crime of perjury; for on that supposition, it would answer the purpose as well, to swear the witnesses by the judge's little finger; only take care to punish perjury when detected. Poor blind mortals that we are! We depend on God in every sense and do not see it in any. His sacred and adorable name has been in all ages, and ever well be the grand pillar to support civil society. But unless religion or the knowledge, fear and worship of God be promoted among the citizens, it is absurd to swear them by his name. The fear of God will be a more powerful restraint from crimes

than all the terrors of gaols and gibbets; and without some degree of a religious fear of the deity, in vain should we hold out to men these terrors; it merits our attention here, that this solemn appeal to the deity in an oath is universal and perpetual as human nature itself; which is no obscure hint that our argument is founded on the common sense of mankind.

6. If the magistrate as such have no concern with religion, then it follows that the subjects or citizens as such have as little. And thus in idea at least, we have a society of rational and moral agents, more dangerous than the most furious beasts of prey. Their reason without the controul of religion only makes them capable of greater mischief. And on this plan, we see a moral relation subsisting among moral agents, without any regard to a moral law, or to God the giver of that law: This is atheism and absurdity with a witness. And we may venture to affirm that no society of men ever could be formed on these principles: or if formed, it could not subsist for one day. But let men in their speculations err as they please, God hath fixed boundaries to human nature over which it cannot pass. And we may assert there never was and never will be a society of men altogether in such a state; though by erroneous views of the subject and men's inattention to religion in civil society; great damage may be done, and we may be reduced to the lowest or nearly the lowest degree of consistency and order in the social state. In a word religion and virtue form the very basis of good government. The knowledge, fear and worship of God are necessary to the very being and conservation of civil society.

7. This truth may be argued from the very design of civil government, which is to prevent or punish those mal-practices, that tend to overthrow the order; subvert the stability and peace; and so work the dissolution of civil society. That this is the design of the institution and erection of civil government, is self evident. But the difficulty is to investigate and ascertain the true extent of the power which ought to be vested in civil rulers for this purpose. The proposition divides itself into two branches, the first is to prevent, the second is to punish crimes. It is much safer and wiser to prevent crimes, if possible, than to punish them. Punishments especially by death must be always disagreeable to humane rulers; and though sometimes necessary, ought never to be executed with a vindictive spirit, but only in terrorem; or to prevent a repetition of the crime by
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the offender himself or by others. And thus the last branch of the office of rulers namely punishing, finally reverts into the first; which serves to shew in the clearest manner that to prevent crimes, is the grand design of civil government. The work of punishing is the last, most unsuccessful and disagreeable expedient. If no previous pains be taken for this purpose; but the whole rested on punishments; the work will grow on the hands of rulers. The more they punish the more they will find to do; until the state like a rotten house, fall on its masters and crush them in its ruins. Those then who think that the sole design of civil government, is to punish, goad and compell men like beasts of burden, are greatly mistaken. The chief design of the institution, is to form the manners of the people to virtue and ev ry species of moral goodness. They who rigorously punish, but take no previous pains to prevent crimes; may be aptly compared to those harsh and tyrannical pedagogues, who use no diligence to lead their pupils on to knowledge; but severely chastise them when found deficient, or not so wise as they ought to be.

But by what means shall crimes be prevented? the question is truly important. In order to it, it is necessary to strengthen the internal bonds of the social union; or in other words the springs of virtue and true goodness. All these may be summed up in two. At least I know not any but will fall under the one or the other. Whatever external bonds may be devised and framed by men to hold society together; the internal are social love and conscience. With these men are fitted by the all-wise creator, both to form and conserve human society. Take one or both away, and there can be no more coherence among mankind, than among scattered atoms driven with a furious wind. We shall consider them in order, and first for social love. By what means shall it be diffused through the body of the people? there is but one way to do this, and that is to promote the knowledge, fear and worship of God. God must be made known to them, as the common parent, friend and benefactor of all men; as the author of all our blessings, which he pours out with a profuse and liberal hand. They must hence learn to view their fellow creatures as children of the same family; under the care of the same indulgent father, and accountable to the same righteous judge. That personal interest consists in promoting that of the public; that the happiness of each individual is comprehended in the good of the whole. In

a word, that true self-love and social are the same. The Christian religion is admirably calculated to strengthen benevolence and promote brotherly love. The doctrine that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, &c. That the Son voluntarily laid down his life to redeem us to God, and the commandment of this beloved Saviour, that men love one another, enforced with this cogent argument, his infinite love to them, if properly represented and urged, might produce glorious consequences. This divine benevolence, if deeply rooted in the heart, would lead spontaneously to all the duties, which we owe to our neighbour. A sacred authority assures us that love is the fulfilling of the law, and can work nothing but good to our neighbour, and we must suppose the laws of every state to be calculated for the good of mankind, and howsoever diversified, if founded on the immutable principles of virtue, must be correspondent to and coincident with the divine law; and therefore this divine principle would lead to the observation of the laws of the state.

The second bond of the social union, which civil rulers ought carefully to strengthen in order to prevent crimes, is conscience. Conscience is just the voice of God in the soul; and may be defined, a man's own judgment on his intentions and actions; in consequence of examining them by the divine law, acquitting or condemning himself as these agree or disagree with said law. This is a powerful bond of society. Were it not for this there would be no government among men at all. God in mercy to men has implanted more or less of it in every breast. And God alone is the Lord of conscience and not any civil state; consequently the divine law is the rule of conscience; and the laws of the state only in so far as they are agreeable to it. It is evident that the moral sense or conscience will admit of various degrees. Indeed, through ignorance of God and his law, and a habitual course of wickedness, men may lose much if not every degree of it.

A perception of good and evil, of moral beauty and deformity; of praise and blame may be almost totally eradicated from their minds. A sacred authority assures us, that some men have their consciences seared as with a hot iron, and are past feeling: yea may arrive at that dreadful state as to glory in their shame, and be ashamed of their glory; and thousands in our country are advanced so far already. It is incumbent then on civil rulers, to use every mean in their power, to give vigour
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and elasticity to conscience. This can be done only by promoting the knowledge of the divine law, the rule of conscience, and of Jehovah the Lord of conscience; which brings us exactly on the same ground, where the former point placed us; and shews in the clearest manner, that all good government is certainly founded on the knowledge, fear and worship of God; the knowledge of his law, his sacred authority, &c.

But another question occurs here, how shall civil rulers promote the knowledge, fear and worship of God? Their own example is a great deal. Let them seek after the knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ the Saviour; let them fear and reverence his holy name; let them practise his worship both public and private, and particularly be careful to sanctify the holy sabbath. The observation of a sabbath for religious exercises, or setting apart, a portion of our time for acquiring the knowledge of God and worshipping him, is a plain dictate of the law of nature. The heathen nations all practised it, though irregularly and devoted much more of their time to religious exercises such as they were, than God requires of us, which is only the seventh part; and without a sabbath, the knowledge, fear and worship of God would inevitably perish from among men. Irreligious rulers may pretend to be friends to their country; but they are the very plagues of it: while by the exercise of power they think to build up the social fabric: by their practice they sap its deepest foundations. Like foolish physicians, while they pretend to heal wounds, cure distempers incident to the body, and without pity lop off members; they corrupt and poison the juices, and tear asunder the ligaments and joints. We have shewed already, that the grand design of civil government is not merely to punish crimes when committed, but to prevent them by forming the manners of the people to virtue and goodness. But how will this work in the hands of profane rulers? Men in exalted stations must have an amazing influence on the lower classes; if the pattern they set be good, they may do much good; if bad, much, very much evil. Blind and infatuated men! who think they can uphold society by their own short-sighted policy and harsh power, while by example they are undermining its foundations. The laws of the state sentence poor wretches to the gibbet; but perhaps in very many instances it will be found that some of the men who enacted the laws, or execute them, may have been the occasion, by their infidelity in principle and profanity in practice, of bringing them there.

It is a work highly worthy of virtuous rulers, and will cooperate with their good example to gain the end proposed, by proper laws to fix and encourage a sufficient number of schools, and other seminaries of learning, throughout the country; and particular attention should be paid to the character of the teachers, and provision made that the pupils be taught not only the arts and sciences, but the principles of religion and virtue. But above all, they should encourage the spreading of the gospel of peace. There is no necessity for, no propriety in granting a civil establishment to any one denomination of Christians, even the purest. But without this, laws might be framed, that would greatly tend to spread the gospel and with it true and undefiled religion. Whatever men may think, who do not allow themselves to think deeply or frequently on this subject; the gospel is the great river of life, which, if it had free course through the nations, would certainly in a high degree purify them; it is the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and bears them every month, and the leaves thereof are for the healing of the nations. What a pity to sit on the banks of this river and refuse its waters! to sit under the shadow of this tree and reject its fruits! Finally they should let all men know, that they ought to profess; and it is expected of them, that they will profess; yea and must profess some religion. That we look on a man who professes no religion, as a wild beast; as the worst of all wild beasts; that his reason only makes him capable of greater mischief than his brethren in the desert. That we are sure, he is not bound in conscience, to disown and deny God; blaspheme his name; profane his sabbath, &c. That he might with equal reason pretend he is bound in conscience to commit robbery, theft, burglary. There is nothing more natural to the human mind than religion in some form or other; and yet there is nothing to which the heart of man is so much opposed as to the true religion; and it is no doubt a collateral proof of Christianity being truly of God; that no wicked man can love it in its native simplicity. But this is consistent enough with our first position, that religion of some kind or other is natural to the human heart. He then must act a most unnatural part who professes no religion in any form. All nations worship some deity; and all men in the day of calamity and death will seek to their God. It is adversity, and especially death approaching, that gives the heart a free vibration. Prosperity debauches it, incarcerates it, deceives it. It is only in prosperity, that men can think
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and act as if they were independent of God. But alas! it is only when enjoying some degree of prosperity, health at least; that they are capable of any social duties; and thus society gets their service, only when divested in some degree of cool recollection. When we see men utterly disregarding God and pouring contempt on his infinite majesty; it is natural to ask: can that man who makes no conscience of his duty to his maker, make any of his duty to his neighbour? will he not injure me if he can with a prospect of advantage, and hopes of impunity? when we hear a man wantonly profaning the name of God. We ask, how can any court admit his oath in evidence? will he in that case venerate the name of God which he daily treats with the most wanton contempt, and perhaps only to give vent to his cruel diabolical passions. And supposing him to be sworn on the Holy Evangelists, as the phrase is, what dignity in the bible, or any part of it; but what is derived from God its author? and what propriety in swearing a man by or on the gospels, who can pass his scornful and profane jests on them, as freely as blaspheme their author? In a word it is absurd to swear by the true God a man who does not know, fear, reverence and worship him. It is absurd to swear a person on, or by the Evangelists, who does not believe them, and who openly manifests that he does not. Thus irreligious men, like Sampson, grasp the pillars of the temple and pull them down to their own ruin and that of thousands.

But to proceed, if the internal bonds of the social union were once properly strengthened; there would be little occasion for punishments. Crimes would be but comparatively few; such as are of an atrocious nature fewer. Rulers would have little to do but to enjoy the honours of their office. And all this felicity can spring from no other source, but true religion and virtue. We have in the above argument supposed, that if our civil rulers do any thing effectually for the advancement of religion; it must be the christian religion: Because we are a nation of professed christians. And it is certain, no religion like it to gain these grand purposes. It was long ago foretold, that these should be the effects and fruits of it. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them: The lion and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and the sucking child shall play on the
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hole of the asp ; and the weaned child on the cockatrice's den ; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. In that strong figurative stile, peculiar to the oriental nations, wicked men are represented under the images of wolves, lions, bears, serpents, &c. but it is foretold that by the influence of the gospel, they should put off the ferocity of their nature and become harmless as lambs and little children. And this is no visionary thing ; the gospel has in numberless instances, produced this effect. It has transformed the most wicked men into the most amiable and useful members of society. Why then seek to change the christian religion for any other. Hath a nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods ? but my people, says God, have changed their glory for that which shall not profit. Every nation under heaven will study to advance and support the religion of their country, and indeed they cannot any other, until they know it ; and why should not we study to advance that which we have reason to believe is the true religion ; at least it must be granted even by deists, that it has a better claim to that character, than any other in the world. It contains all the principles of natural religion, all its promises, all its precepts, and all its motives, and makes many valuable additions to them. No religion comparable to it, to promote the peace, purity and felicity of human society. We should make a miserable exchange ; if instead of it, we should embrace judaism, mahometanism, or heathenism. But were any professing these religions to come among us, it would be unjust and against christianity to restrain them by force ; or to divest them of any natural rights on that account ; though consistently enough they might be excluded from places of power and trust in the government ; because offices in any government are not natural rights. Thus in my opinion all forms of religion, the principles of which, do not subvert the foundation of good government ; may be safely tolerated ; but the man of no religion is the most dangerous, and in fact is not a fit subject of moral government. In the case of crimes against the state the perpetrators must be punished ; and in the present degenerate state of society among us, punishments will be often necessary, they ought to be properly apportioned, neither exceeding in severity nor lenity, and punctually and inflexibly executed. Our rulers should strike the blow at the root. Neglect and contempt of God, cursing, profane swearing, violation of the sabbath, gaming and such evils,

evils, should feel their indignation; and as has been remarked, such punishments will be auxiliary to the grand design of preventing crimes.

All that has been said above about the means of promoting religion, is perfectly consistent with all the rights of conscience. For what is conscience? Let us attend to the former definition of it, or to sum it up in fewer words, it may be called a perception of the obligation of the divine law. Can ever reasonable beings pretend then, that they are bound by the divine law to violate that law? or that they are bound in conscience to cast off all conscience. This is not much less absurd, than to say that a man is bound to jump down his own throat. Liberty of conscience is out of the question, when we speak of the duties of morality; it is equally foreign to the question, when we speak of the plain essential duties of religion, such as acknowledging God, revering his sacred name, keeping his sabbath; or at least devoting some part of our time to his service, and the seventh part is a rational and easy precept. Liberty of conscience extends only to speculative opinions and modes of worship. Full latitude in these ought to be granted. Our constitutions and laws grant it; our civil rulers discover no disposition to infringe it. To promote religion and virtue is therefore so far from being a violation of the rights of conscience; that in fact, it is the only method to illuminate, direct and strengthen conscience*.

8. The truth which we defend, is supported by the uniform practice of all civilized nations. None of them pretend to erect or preserve civil government without laying the foundations of the fabric in religious and moral sentiments. This is a fact not only in modern times; but if we look back into antiquity we shall see it was equally the case. It is a fact not only in nations called christian; but was equally so among the ancient heathen. Do we see any of the great legislators of antiquity treating religion with neglect or contempt? Nay, they earnestly promoted it according to the light they had. And some of them to affect the consciences of their citizens the more; pretended to receive their laws from the Gods. They were men of understanding and sense, and knew well, that unless they diffused abroad

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* The writer of this published the substance of the seventh argument several years ago in Mr. Loudon's paper of New-York; with a sincere desire to correct the extravagant ideas prevailing about religious liberty.

the knowledge, fear and worship of a deity; men are such creatures, that all human authority and power would be insufficient to restrain them from the wildest outrages. It is allowed to be a good argument to prove the greatest of all truths, the existence of a supreme being; that all nations in all ages have unanimously agreed in it. The argument is equally good and conclusive in the present case. Our ancestors were men of deep understanding in the science of government. It was not for nothing, that they in their constitutions and laws, paid so much attention to religion. They may in some instances have run into error. But some in our days, in order to avoid their errors, have run into extremes equally if not more dangerous. The Westminster confession of faith seems to give rather too much power to the civil magistrate about the church. These passages appear to have been adapted to civil establishments of religion, which have no place in this country, and therefore are not applicable to our circumstances. We adhere to the confession in these, only in so far as they are consistent with the rights of conscience, the spiritual and independent nature of Christ's kingdom, the principles above defined and established, and the circumstances in which providence hath placed us.

Finally, let us on this subject attend to fact and experience. Who are the people that crowd our gaols and load our gibbets? are they the strict professors of the christian religion? are they dragged from these religious societies, where the pure doctrines of the gospel are embraced? where God is worshipped with christian simplicity and purity? and where a strict scriptural discipline is maintained? By no means. And we fear not to appeal for the truth of this observation to the greatest enemies of religion. Are duellers, murderers, thieves, robbers, adulterers, fornicators, profane swearers, and blasphemers, to be found among the disciples of the humble and Holy Jesus? nay, there are examples of religious societies consisting of many thousand souls, of which we may boldly affirm, that in the space of half a century or more, not half a dozen of their members have suffered by the hands of public justice in any form. And it would be a most proper expedient to elucidate this fact, that nations should keep registers of all who suffer for their crimes; but especially whether they professed any religion, walked in communion with any church, and what their religion was; and publish these annually. This would bring fully to light, a truth
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and fact, which would not reflect much honour on the neglecters and opposers of religion. It would then appear, whether the theatre or the church, whether stage plays or the gospel, have the most salutary influence on the morals of mankind, and tend most to promote the good order of civil society. O ye advocates for theatrical entertainments, mimicry and nonsense, for duelling, gaming, balls, &c. before such a representation, you would blush as the owl before the sun! One might expect, were things conducted by reason in this world, that the above undeniable facts, would be sufficient to induce civil communities, and their rulers; earnestly to study to promote true religion; and give proper checks to the sources of corruption and dissolution above mentioned. They would not labour in vain. Good fruits would follow. All the virtues follow in the train of true religion.

On the whole we confess it is extremely difficult perhaps impossible, precisely to fix limits on this subject; or to say particularly how far and no farther; communities & rulers may go in their constitutions and laws to promote religion and virtue among them. That they ought not by any means to invade the prerogatives of the church, or infringe upon the rights of conscience, is undoubtedly true. But that in order to avoid this invasion and infringement, they ought to pay no attention to the subject; but permit the principles and bonds of the social union to be quite corrupted and dissolved, is a most dangerous and unreasonable principle. This is the principle which I reprobate; and contend that as legislative bodies and magistrates, would study the preservation of the body politic, they must in order to this, study to promote religion and morality. The means to be used are not obscure. They have been partly hinted. But the manner of applying these means; and how far civil authority may be safely used for the purpose; will require the deepest penetration and closest attention, to discern. And no doubt much may be learned from experience.

I do not mean to intimate, that nothing of the kind, has been done in the United States. They have at least given the fullest liberty to religion; that is, they declare they will not hinder or forbid it in any form. This is at least favouring it in a negative way. But surely it is of so much importance to society, as to merit some positive encouragement. We are convinced, that the idea of civil liberty entertained by many, amounts to licentiousness, or a rejection of all due subordination.

tion. As to religion our case is much worse; even sensible good men seem to have carried their ideas of the spiritual nature of the church, and her independency on the civil powers, to a dangerous extreme. While many others fondly imagine, that the civil authority ought to pay no regard to religion and morality at all, but allow, not only the fullest liberty as to principles and forms of religion; but even permit all, totally to drop every principle and form of it, if they please. This is the dangerous error we would wish to overthrow; being persuaded, that a man in such a state, cannot possibly be a subject of moral government. There is no handle by which we can take hold of him; no principle by which we can bind him. We may subjoin here the words of a sensible writer on this subject*: "It may be difficult, says he, always to preserve the distinction between the civil and ecclesiastical state, and the rights and powers belonging to each, without encroachment on the one side or the other. Those powers which are co-ordinate, subsisting together in the same time and place, and employed about some objects in common, but in a different manner, will be in great danger of interference: rivalry and mutual jealousies may be expected naturally to arise between them; and attempts will not be wanting to render one of them subordinate and dependent on the other: and, in fact, ever since the magistrate became Christian, these mutual struggles and usurpations have been almost unintermitting; and either the one or the other hath claimed, or actually exercised, an undue superiority; sometimes the ecclesiastical power overtopping, and basely subjecting the temporal, as under the Papacy; or the temporal, in its turn, assuming a supremacy and legislative authority in spiritual things, as hath been, and continues to be, visibly the case in many countries professing the Reformation, and appears to become still more and more the case in almost all nations of Christendom, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic; which is a new kind of political Papacy, no less dangerous and tyrannical than the former, rearing itself on the
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* See a piece, entitled, "True Patriotism, or Public Spirit, by Mr. Archibald Bruce, a member of the Associate Synod of Edinburgh." The substance of which was delivered before said Synod. Let the advocates for a servile subordination to that Synod, compare these rational sentiments, with what they have published to the world as their principles on this subject.

ruins of the old. But yet in order to avoid one extreme, there is no necessity of running into another. A church and commonwealth may have certain connections together, and may perform mutual offices and duties towards each other, without losing their peculiar distinctive characters, and without being absurdly blended together in one heterogeneous constitution. A medium may be found, however hard to hit, between an Erastian supremacy and Sectarian anarchy; tyrannical slavery and lawless licentiousness.

“If indifference about the cause of God be culpable in others, how can it be excusable or laudable in rulers? Are they, of all men, excepted from the authority of Christ? or are they the only persons who, by virtue of their office, are necessarily debarred from any possibility of knowing with certainty *what is truth?* Or are they, upon such a discovery, under the hard necessity of neglecting, and, on the matter, renouncing it again; having their hands tied, in their official character, from showing it any distinguished respect, or affording it any peculiar assistance; being equally obliged, in order to rule well, to nurse up its opposite with the same care and tenderness? Must the crown of Cæsar and the crown of Christ be ever at variance, and incapable of any friendly alliance? Shall a cry be raised among any, but such as have a mind that Christ should be crucified, that the man who shall pass a sentence in favour of Christ from the judgment-seat, is not “Cæsar’s friend,” nor a friend to the natural rights and liberties of mankind? Or is the sceptre so profane, that it may not touch any thing that hath the image and superscription of Jesus upon it? However such maxims should now be cried up as the quintessence and height of good policy, and as containing the model of the most perfect and happy government, I am afraid they can hardly be exempted from the charge of impiety.

“A magistrate who, like *Gallio*, should account religious matters none of his care, instead of meriting hereby the title of a good magistrate, would more properly deserve that of an irreligious infidel or atheist.”

T H E E N D.

The Reader is desired to attend to the following Notes :

Note for Page 15. *There is doubtless an infinite sufficiency in the death of Christ for all men, yea for all the fallen angels. This we may affirm without any danger of exaggeration. The blood of the Son of God was and is sufficient to wash the foulest devils white. But it must be carefully observed that the necessity of an infinite atonement does not arise from the number but nature of sin. It is as necessary for the pardon of one sin, as ten thousand—to the salvation of one sinner as ten millions. It would eclipse the glory of the divine character, and be as repugnant to his holiness, justice and moral government, to pardon one sinner without an atonement, as to pardon ten thousand millions. For he that offends in one point, is guilty of all; and if one sin in its nature did not infer the necessity of an infinite atonement to pardon, ten thousand millions would not infer that necessity; because degrees do not alter the species or kind; numbers do not vary nature. If we then rest the argument about the extent of Christ's death, on its infinite sufficiency; that argument will extend it to all the devils as well as to all men; yea, to every thing that is in any manner affected by the sin of angels and men. If we do not build it on its sufficiency, as indeed it is preposterous and absurd to do so; then it must rest on the divine sovereignty. And in fact no other reason can be assigned why God appointed his death for men and not for the fallen angels. Well then if the extent of his death rests on the divine sovereignty; the conclusion of that argument is, that Christ died just for those for whom God saw meet to appoint his death. And it follows, that he died only for his sheep, I lay down my life for the sheep, or those given to Him by the Father. Some will say this is discouraging doctrine. But why discouraging? For even supposing Christ shed his blood for all men, it is clear from the bible that without faith in it, it would avail you nothing. And the same word assures you, that if you believe in him, accept and submit to him, you shall be certainly saved by him. Thus supposing the false doctrine true, you are just where you were, it could give you no more comfort than you now have. For if any accept of Christ as offered in the gospel this ascertains the appointment of the death of Christ for him; on this ground he may stand and look back into the eternal councils and see God appointing Christ's death for him.*

Note for Page 16. *I have said that it would be no act of strict distributive injustice, were Jesus Christ to cast even true believers eternally from his presence. This may at first alarm some honest minds;*

I will therefore explain : By strict distributive justice I mean treating a person according to his personal merit or demerit : now were the salvation of true believers an act of justice in that sense, it is manifest, it could not be an act of mere grace and mercy ; if they personally merited pardon and salvation, they would be justified by works, not by grace ; but their salvation is ever in the scriptures ascribed to rich sovereign grace. Neither the act nor merit of Christ's righteousness can with propriety be said to be transfused into believers so as to become really their personal act and merit. But his complete righteousness is sustained in law as the ground or reason of their justification ; and God is just in justifying them ; distributive justice can make no objection to their salvation, though it do not require it. Justification is not a real but a relative change : It is not the infusion of righteousness, but only placing righteousness to the person's account and treating him accordingly ; all which is grace, not distributive justice. But justice taken in a large sense, in which sense it includes whatever is morally fit and proper to be done, certainly demands their salvation. God must be just to himself, true to his word, faithful to the promises of his grace and mercy, just to reward the sufferings of his Son and the fruits of his own gracious Spirit in the hearts and lives of true believers. Among many other texts that might be quoted in proof of my assertion, I shall only refer to Ps. 51—11. Cast me not away from thy presence, &c. and indeed the whole Psalm is to the same purpose, Ps. 130—3, if thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord ! who could stand, Lam. 3—22, it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Mal. 3—6, I am God I change not therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed, Ps. 143—2, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified. And even those Christians who may be startled at the expression will justify it in their prayers. They will freely confess God would be just and his throne guiltless were he to cast them into hell. They pray for mere mercy ; and this is the tenor of all their addresses to the throne of grace.

