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RETROSPECTIVE THEOLOGY,

OR THE

OPINIONS

OF THE

WORLD OF SPIRITS.

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Philadelphia:

PUBLISHED BY A. FINLEY, CORNER OF FOURTH AND CHESTNUT STREETS.

1825.



RETROSPECTIVE THEOLOGY.

If BUNYAN dreamed, when he wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*, then let me be deemed a dreamer also. I placed myself in thought, beyond the utmost bounds of what the dwellers on earth call *time*, quite in the verge of *eternity*. Methought the last child of Adam's race had been born; the last age had come and gone; the Judge had been revealed from heaven, in the glory of his Father, the glory of justice, with his angels; the dead, small and great, had arisen before their Maker; the judgment of the great day was past; the earth had been changed by fire; and every human being was now either in heaven or hell.

Great was my surprise at finding myself in the future world, beyond the solemn scenes of death, the resurrection, and the judgment. I could look back upon the earth with all its employments, enjoyments, sufferings, hopes and fears, saying, 'It was,—but is no more.' A new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, were before me: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. But how widely different did I find the eternal world to be from what I had once imagined!

Heaven and *hell* were found to be two distinct *states* of existence; in one of which all were happy who at death had entered that state, and in the other all were miserable. So much of infinite space, nevertheless, as was occupied by the bodies of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his saints, who followed the Lamb whithersoever he went, was called *the third heavens*; but this portion of space was not always in the same relative situation; for I learned by the most delightful experience that our Redeemer, seated in a body, like the bodies of his people, on a great white throne, at will passed from one planet and sun, throughout immensity, to another, with the rapidity of the light. His redeemed ones also, without weariness, could follow him as quick as thought; so that they had only to choose to be present in body with him, and their *spiritual bodies* were before him in an instant. In thought, in feeling, in the enjoyment of his approbation and love; in *spirit*, not one of the countless myriads of sanctified persons, ever departed from the Son of man in his glory.

The attraction of gravitation, which had formerly bound the bodies of the human race to the surface of their native globe, no longer operated on the visible forms of the eternal world; for as Jesus, after his resurrection, went up at pleasure into heaven, or vanished from the apostles, or was present in an upper chamber whose doors and windows needed not to be opened for his introduction, so the inhabitants of the celestial state could be visible or invisible to damned mortals, or could visit any one of whom they thought, whether in one solar system or another, by a wish.

Over all unanimated matter the law of gravitation

still continued in force; and the systems of suns, planets and inferior satellites, still moved on in their accustomed orbits, displaying the wisdom, power and goodness of the Creator. Not one of these orbs could be said, exclusively, to be heaven; not one hell.

That portion of infinite space which from time to time was occupied by Satan, evil angels, and the persons of lost men, in which all were miserable, and certain of the perpetuity of their anguish, I found was called HELL, or the world of accursed beings. The inhabitants of this dreadful department of woe had the power of moving from one relative position in immensity to another; but not the same liberty which was accorded to the saints; and so are denominated "spirits in prison;" for while the saints could transport themselves wherever they chose, because every act of their will was pleasing to God, the damned could only accomplish their desires in part, being subject to restraints and frequent disappointments. This was a part of their punishment.

It had not escaped me, that the Saviour, while on earth, had informed his disciples, that between heaven and hell *a great gulf was fixed*; and so I found it, for God's immutable purpose not to pardon any sinners after death, and not to leave any saved ones to apostatize, rendered it as impossible for persons to pass from one endless state, called heaven, to another, called hell; as it was for the children of men, while on earth, and under the law of gravitation, to pass a wide spreading and bottomless abyss.

While a pilgrim, seeking the heavenly country, I had earnestly desired to form just conceptions of the future states, both of the good and the evil; but oh!

how far inferior to the reality where my most enlarged, scriptural ideas. I was right, however, in the opinions derived from the sacred oracles; for I found that every saint had a body glorious, and free from all defects. Those who were maimed, diseased, and deformed, when believers on earth, were now fashioned like the body of Jesus; so that every limb, every feature, every motion, every expression was grace and loveliness. There were among them, it is true, the great and the small; and one uniform sameness did not prevail through heaven; but every one in his place was perfect, and God had freed them all from hunger, thirst, sickness, and tears. None of these ever became weary, or desired cessation from employment; and there was no night there.

The wicked were not thus favoured, for although they were rendered immortal by the resurrection, through the power of Jesus, yet in the state of endless misery, they present, in their bodies, as great a variety of deformity, decrepitude, ugliness, disease and wretchedness, as they ever did before they descended to the grave. They seemed to be ever dying, but could not die. Like the bush which Moses saw at Horeb, every inhabitant of hell was covered with lambient, and ever changing, flames of fire, with which they were tormented wherever they went, while their bodies were prevented by the punitive justice of Jehovah from being reduced to ashes.

The happy and the miserable immortals of the world of spirits, appeared to me to possess every mental faculty which they had in their previous state of existence. They all remembered the past, and could converse with each other concerning the events of time,

and their own conduct in passing to eternity. I observed, in particular, that those in heaven and in hell who had read the Bible more or less in life, were still able to refer to its sacred contents, but while the memory of the saints was perfected, so that they could quote any part with accuracy, the wicked seemed to possess about the same knowledge of it which they did before their decease, and consequently were frequently chargeable with such misrepresentations and erroneous views as added new energy to their hatred of God and his Christ.

There was a constant intercourse between heaven and hell, like that attributed by Jesus to a rich man and Lazarus, after they had both died; and I learned that the inhabitants of each state continued to possess their intellectual, sensitive, social, voluntary, and active nature. The good always found happiness to belong to all their agency; but the wicked never could obtain the least satisfaction, or respite from their pains, by any kind of activity, society, or retirement. They desired gratification, but could not find it. They were tormented with hunger, thirst, and every insatiable lust; but no fruits could regale them; no drop of water cool their tongue; and when, from a desire to obtain some alleviation of their anguish, they assembled in a mighty company around Lucifer, it seemed as if each one were a brand cast into an unquenchable fire, increasing its fury; and their infernal King became the centre of a flaming world. Indeed, in every instance in which any two lost sinners approximated each other, the flames which moved like tongues of fire around their persons, arose to a greater height, and blazed more fiercely.

Let it not be inferred from any thing, which has been narrated, that the chief pains of the miserable in

hell are the result of some material action on their immortal bodies; for all pleasure and pain are in the mind; and those feelings of grief, hatred, sorrow and revenge, malignity, shame, envy, and despair, which are the constant lot of all the accursed, are unspeakably worse than any painful sensations derived from their afflicted bodies. In some sense, all hell and all heaven are in the souls that realize the endless misery or felicity of those unalterable states.

One remark, I cannot refrain from recording in this place; that among the happy saints in heaven, no one of whom felt the least pain of any sort, there were different degrees of honour and felicity, which corresponded exactly with the measure of each one's piety and good works, performed after he became a pardoned sinner; and among the children of the world of woe, no one of whom experienced the least particle of happiness, some were more miserable than others, exactly according to their respective degrees of criminality in the sight of the holy God. Thus the scriptures were fulfilled which taught, that God would render unto every man according to his deeds; that some should be beaten with many and others with few stripes; that some should rule over five and others over ten cities; and that it should be more tolerable in the judgment for some impenitent sinners than for others; for Sodom and Nineveh, than for devoted Jerusalem.

To describe the sweet society of the blessed, so as to give mortals adequate conceptions of it, while they dwell on earth is impossible: suffice it to say, that all the good who knew one another before their decease, were immediately intimate with each other after entering the world of spirits, and glorified God by their recollections

of past mercies and corrections, as well as for their celestial intercourse and social blessedness. I found also, that the inhabitants of heaven were frequently forming new acquaintances; for no sooner did any heir of glory think of a child of God, of whom he had ever heard, and wish to be present with him, than he was present, with the utmost friendship. The more eminent in knowledge and power, were ever ready to communicate, and it was the delight of all to receive streams of pleasure from the God of love, through the instrumentality of their companions. If any saint, moreover, desired to see a child of wrath, he could instantly be near enough to him to converse with him; and from the knowledge thus obtained of the misery of the lost, and of the justice of God in their damnation, while the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever; the redeemed were induced to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb with renewed gratitude, humility, and admiration.

While the work of every citizen of the new Jerusalem was intellectual, cordial, voluntary, unintermitted, and full of praise to Jehovah, I still found that every one had some peculiarity of mental disposition; and each enjoyed and glorified God according to his former mental habits and acquirements. This made the scenes of Paradise ever varied and ever new.

As for myself, while on earth, I was fond of doctrinal disquisition, and considered religious opinions as vitally affecting moral conduct. It was my judgment, that as a man *thinketh* so is he, in the state of his heart, and the manner of his deportment. I had learned also, that he that is of God, heareth God's words; and that it was the duty of the pious to contend earnestly, in

every lawful way, for the faith once delivered to the saints. Indeed, I was thoroughly convinced that some errors in faith were absolutely incompatible with love to the true character of God, and saving union to Christ.

It is scarcely necessary to state, therefore, that after I had taken a general survey of the world of spirits, and had feasted my eyes on the God-man-mediator, and had united thousands of thousands of times in thanking him for my salvation, saying, "Alleluia: we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned: fear God, and give glory to him: great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; true and just are thy ways, thou King of saints: worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood: halleluja: amen;" it was one of my first objects to ascertain what were now the doctrinal opinions of my former acquaintance, whether they were in heaven or in hell. I determined, therefore, to enter into such an investigation as I thought might redound to the honour of him who is altogether lovely, and whom the heavenly hosts praise without weariness. Particularly I wished to know how men thought and felt, when looking back, from the heights of eternity, on *Original Sin, Human Depravity, Divine Decrees, Free Agency, the Deity of Christ, the Atonement, the New Birth, the Perseverance of Saints* and *Universal Salvation*: and I was soon gratified, for no delays, no wearisome journey, no idle formalities, can detain any happy spirit from being present to the object of its pursuit.

It must be premised, that God alone, of all the beings in the universe, possessed, in my esteem, infinite knowledge and power. His saints did not any of them know all things, even in heaven; but what each one knew, he knew clearly; and there were no discordant theories and sentiments among the heavenly hosts. Nearly half of the inhabitants of heaven had the stature, and the comparative attainments of children and youth; but those who had been longest with Jesus in the world of spirits, other things being equal, possessed the largest share of knowledge. All but God, were ever learning in glory, and ever coming to the knowledge of truth: but alas! hell was full of ignorance, extravagance, prejudice, misrepresentation, lies, superstition, suspicion, false-accusation, gloominess, anguish and blasphemy: and in hell, all were continually becoming more and more like the supremely wicked and miserable first Rebel.

In my doctrinal inquiries, I desired first to converse with one of the friends of my youth, a naturally amiable and highly accomplished young clergyman; for as yet I had not met him in the eternal world, and did not certainly know whether he was in heaven or hell. In life I had often said, if any Socinian of my acquaintance has gone to heaven, it must be that youth; for he had been religiously educated by a pious and evangelical father, had a kind temperament of mind, was quick of apprehension, wrote excellent moral discourses, preached eloquently, and abstained from all visible immorality of life. Is he in heaven? thought I; and wishing to see him, lo! instantly I was on the margin of the atmosphere of Saturn, and the Socinian was before me. But my eyes no sooner met his than he dart-

ed into a thick cloud, and for a moment was hidden from me. Yet again I wished to see him, and in the twinkling of an eye, the murky darkness was beyond him, and he stood forth to my view, the same in figure and features as when I last saw him in the pulpit;—but oh! how changed in the expression of his countenance, and in every motion of his once graceful person. Every look was despair; and every motion torture. His eyes darted vengeance, and tongues of flame flitted all about him, like the blue burnings of sulphur: but saved immortals have no *fear*, while their *pity* resembles that of Immanuel. Full of tenderness, and with assurance that our Judge had done him no injustice, I accosted him; but he cursed me for my presence, and demanded why I had come to torment him, by recalling the scenes, and perverted privileges of his former existence.

“You saints look like my Judge,” said he: “your persons seem clothed with the glory of the sun, begone; for I hate you.”

Yet once we loved each other, said I, with fraternal affection; and we preached in the same pulpits.

“That only makes me more accursed. You prayed for me too; and my father spent many sleepless nights in prayer for my conversion to what you call orthodox; and curses on you both for your prayers, for they have sunk me deeper in hell.”

Such, however, was not our intention,—

“But such was the decree of fate,” he interrupted, “and now you are saved, and I, no whit worse than yourself, only I could not believe the doctrines of the Deity of Christ, and of original sin, and such like absurdities, am lost, lost, for ever!”

Were you ever willing, I inquired, during your na-

tural life, to be saved from sin and hell through the redemption which was in Christ Jesus; and did you ever sincerely ask of God the Holy Ghost to renew and sanctify you?

“No! never! never! nor am I now willing; for before my decease I was as free from sin as the best of you; and to be saved exclusively through the merits of Christ is derogatory to human nature; and you, saved one, if you had the spirit of a man, would rebel against the doctrines and the exercise of free grace.”

Let me now ask you if Jesus was not truly one person of a divine and human nature?

With fearful menaces, if saints in bliss could be made to fear, he bade me here, “begone,” again; and gnashing his teeth said, “I’ll never own him for God; but he has raised me from the dead; he has judged, he has damned me. Oh! the inexpressible horrors of hell and damnation.”

And are you not here, said I, on the verge of Saturn? Pray, what do you here?

“Yes, nigh Saturn; but still I am lost, because I could not say *shibboleth* like the orthodox: and here fate keeps me, when not interrupted by such visitors as yourself, forever prying into the mystery of this broad belt around Saturn, and I can gain no satisfaction. I cannot cease from painful investigation; and here I am chained to it, by some bands of inexorable fate. I am compelled to choose my own bane and hate its antidote. When I move from Saturn a few millions of miles, the belt appears to me, and when I return to the very portion of infinite space which it must occupy, no longer is it to be found. This endless prying into the mysteries of nature, is one part of

the hell of philosophers, and you know on earth I was a philosophical christian of the liberal stamp. Could I but forever leave this belt of Saturn and think of something else, it would be as a drop of water to cool my tongue."

I proceeded to inquire into his doctrinal opinions on many subjects, but found his mind full of darkness and his answers inconsistent with each other; for he still denied the plenary inspiration of the bible; thought the three first chapters of John's gospel spurious, and i John v. 7, an interpolation; and denied the necessity of any strictly legal atonement. When I pressed him with the truth of God, he became more and more outrageous, until I left him, shrouding himself in the blackness of darkness, and uttering such blasphemies as it would be sin to record. Surely, said I, if any man loves not our Lord Jesus Christ he is anathema; and a false religion, when it nearly resembled the true in outward forms and decencies, and had the name of rational, candid, liberal, philosophical christianity, was one of the most delusive ways to perdition.

From this once lovely, but lost youth, I turned away, and in thought was next present with a gentleman of my earthly acquaintance, who was a preacher occasionally, but statedly the preceptor of an academy. It had not escaped my memory, that he was a good writer, and a violent polemic, formerly; whose system of theology, in the opinion of many pious people, tended to Socinianism. He was a wit, of the keenest sort; and with him, any man who wrote a book, which he did not like, was "a catspaw," a hypocrite; and all the friends of such a writer, were *Buckram*, sons of *Fog*, Jesuits, gluttons, or drunkards, not influenced in their

preaching by the love of truth, or the love of God, or the love of men, but by an "unhallowed system of opposition and intrigue," by the love of themselves and the fear of a rival. I knew he was a false accuser of some eminent servants of Jesus Christ, when he said, "the whole conduct of these men is such as might be expected from an ambitious man labouring to supplant his rival and enemy. They show no love nor condescension—no meekness nor humility—no openness nor magnanimity." "I pity these busy men, the very principle of whose scheme is selfishness and ambition." "They can no more endure the light than ghosts and goblins can abide the approach of morning; it discloses their frightful features, and pierces them through with intolerable pain." With such vituperative language his productions were replete; nevertheless, I did hope that he would be found at last an honest man himself; and that his misrepresentation and bitterness were so the result of ignorance, as not to be inconsistent with the existence of some saving grace in his soul.

This proved a reality, for I found him occupying a humble sphere in the regions of glory; elevated but a little above the vast multitude of children. We were friendly now; and wished each other joy; but he told me that the fire, which tried every man's ministerial work, had consumed most of his; that he had suffered loss, but that he himself was saved; yet so as by running through the fire, that burnt up his wood, hay, and stubble.

"And what has become of that ancient infidel Physician?" asked I, "who was a professed convert to christianity through your *Trifling*. Has he reached hea-

ven also; or has he been deluded by his devotion to your sarcasm, and natural ability?"

"That was my loss," the author of the Triangle replied, "that he adopted my errors, without any admixture of saving grace in his soul. Alas! that work hardened many in false schemes, but aided none in their pilgrimage towards the spiritual Canaan."

I must visit that same lost Physician, thought I, and learn how sad a thing it was for any true christian to write a bad book.

But in the world of spirits, when I desired to see him, and ascertain his present sentiments, I found him for ever doomed to abide within a *Triangle* from every side of which, let him move where he would, proceeded darting flames, as vivid as the lightning, which transfixed his person. He was still emaciated and haggard, and still was engaged in a triangular warfare against the divine economy of man's salvation. I could distinctly read, in letters that appeared to be composed of little stars, on the margin of his fiery triangle the very words which had been inscribed on the title page of a terrestrial production; "*All men are condemned for Adam's sin: men are naturally unable to do right: Christ died for none but the elect.*"

Pointing to the three sides of his own triangle he said, as I approached him, "and this was your Calvinistic system!" and attempted to thrust a corner of his burning enclosure into my face. The flame, however, would not come nigh me, but reverted, as if blown back by a tempest, with increasing fury on himself.

He was still disposed to ridicule the doctrines of scripture as narrow, contracted, selfish and triangular.

"Are you for ever accursed?" I asked: and he re-

plied, "I am confined to this *Triangle*, made after the pattern of an earthly invention: oh! the torment of a guilty conscience! and I can see nothing but triangles; for God seems a triangle, Christ a triangle with one vacant side, creation a triangle, and redemption a triangle. I seem to have a triangle hanging to each of my fingers. Can you not see them? *The fall, election, reconciliation!* Yes, that's a triangle. But this torments me also, that I cannot convict any one of your clan of the folly which I formerly attributed to him. Besides, I want society here in my everlasting state; and I cannot enjoy the company of you triangular divines. My pride keeps me aloof from the vulgar herd of lost men. I have a taste for more refined and intellectual blasphemies than they employ; and as for Edwards, Hopkins, Bellamy, Spring, and Emmons, men with whom I expected to spend eternity in the luxury of metaphysical disquisition, no sooner do I catch a glimpse of them than they vanish from my sight."

"No wonder," I replied, "for they are in the heavenly state. They were renewed men, and had none of your implacable wrath, bitterness, wilful lies, and malignity. Besides, some of them erred in their speculations on earth, yet not to such a degree as to exclude true piety from their souls; and they have now no disposition to waste the blissful moments of eternity in conversation with one who, though not one of the most filthy of unpardoned sinners, I perceive is yet destined to be *filthy still.*"

So saying, I departed, while he continued to rail at the triangularity of Christianity; at apostacy in Adam, election by grace, and the complete redemption of the elect by Christ. It occurred to me, that a little inter-

course with those divines who ever fled from the man in the triangle would be profitable; and at once I joined them in a hymn of praise to our Redeemer. After the song ceased for a little time from our lips, and seemed to be resounding like echo from one world to another, President Edwards said, that he had been misapprehended, in relation to *the best possible world*; for he intended not, that the earth was the best world in itself that the deity could produce; but merely that Jehovah always did that which was best on the whole, all events, all beings, and all worlds being duly regarded; and that the earth, in the place which it occupied, and for the purposes for which it was made, was the best possible world.

Dr. Hopkins had long since relinquished the false notions that all the christian graces are reducible to love; that all sin consists in selfishness; and that a willingness to be damned for the glory of God was an essential requisite to a gracious state of mind. Paul had long since told him, that it was in his unrenewed state, that he did wish himself accursed from Christ.

Dr. Emmons now saw, clearly, that God never was the efficient cause and creator of any volitions of the human mind, and that God did not harden the heart of Pharaoh and move him to sin, by any positive and direct influence.

Sin, all admitted to be, the transgression of the law, and the proper act of every one to whom God imputed it.

Thanking God that he had by his sovereign grace made us to differ from those who held damnable heresies, immediately we were before the throne, casting down our crowns at the feet of the Saviour, and

tuning to his praise our golden harps, with the innumerable hosts that were around him.

Paul was the next glorified personage whose judgment I desire to consult, and a single wish introduced me to his presence. The apostle was in company with our father Adam; and reclining on a flowery mountain of Mars, they discoursed of the refashioned earth, which had been reduced from the ashes of the general conflagration. No two persons, said I, could be selected, whom I would rather consult on the subject of the apostacy of man; and you are here together. Hail, father of men; hail, great Apostle of the Gentiles!

With heavenly love they bade me welcome, and in answer to my interrogations Adam said,

Truly I was the first of all my race; and when the Lord God had breathed into me the breath of life, and I became a living person, my Maker stood beside me in a visible form like my own. He could vanish from me, however, in an instant, while I could never become invisible to him. This form, I subsequently learned, Jehovah, the Angel of the Covenant, assumed from time to time, and then annihilated, as he had occasion to converse with myself, with Abraham, Moses, and others. He walked in the garden, in the cool of the evening; told me he was my Creator, and prescribed my duty. He put to the test my love for him by the interdiction of a single tree; and at the same time designated the tree of life as a solemn pledge, that if I was obedient through a time of probation which his wisdom had assigned, I should enjoy life for ever.

Paul. And did you know at this time, that you was put on probation, and was to stand or fall as the representative of every one of your posterity?

Adam. My Maker thought fit to teach me before my transgression, much more than my posterity generally supposed that he did, for he made me the representative of all my race, by his own wise, sovereign, and I may say gracious councils. My consent, which was cheerfully granted to all the known appointments of God, was not absolutely necessary to this divinely appointed relation, any more than the consent of my unborn children. They were, at that time, all of them, conceived of by the Deity as being represented by, and tried in, myself. I acted as well for them as they would have done for themselves; and I was tried singly, under such circumstances as are narrated in the Bible. In sinning, I was no worse than my children in some of their transgressions, with this exception, that I was created in maturity of body and mind; was uninfluenced by any known example of disobedience, beside that of Eve; and had some extraordinary inducements to obedience. They were born infants, in a sinful state, and were under the influence of evil example before they were capable of sinning after the similitude of my transgression. Alas! I transgressed against the known law of my Creator; against awful responsibilities; and soon realized in my own family, to my unspeakable sorrow, that I had doomed all my children to be born without any inheritance of original righteousness, in the same state of moral degradation into which I had fallen, exposed to the temptations of the Devil, and liable to all the sins and miseries of this life; and through their own voluntary, certain imitation of my example, to the pains of hell for ever. Had I obeyed as their representative, through the whole of my probation, God would have brought them into the world under such circum-

stances as would have rendered their perfect obedience as sure as it would have been voluntary on their part, for he would have reckoned them as possessing in me their federal head, original righteousness, for their justification, and confirmation in holiness.

Paul. The same was my understanding of the subject when the Holy Ghost revealed to me, and I recorded, for the instruction of the world, that “in Adam all die;”—“by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”—“through the offence of one many be dead:”—“by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners:”—and “by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.”

In you, acting as our representative, we all sinned; in you, as our representative, we were all condemned as insufficient to obtain everlasting life by our own obedience in a state of probation, even had we been individually placed in one; and through your conduct as our representative, we were all born without any true holiness, and liable to death temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Here I desired to know in what sense the sin of Adam was *imputed* to every one of his race; and *Paul* continued:

Our adorable Father and Judge ever *reckoned* or *imputed* things according to reality. He never imputed anything contrary to truth. He *imputed* Adam’s sin to Adam, as committed by himself; and he *imputed* Adam’s sin to us, as sin perpetrated by him as our representative. He reckoned each child of Adam to have originally sinned and fallen in him, as a representative, because this was according to reality, after Jehovah had constituted him the representative of all mankind. Here

was no *transfer* of personal actions, nor did our God ever *impute* the actions of one person to another, as being his own identical actions.

Again I interposed, and asked, if there was no *transfer* of the *guilt* of Adam to his posterity; and the sire of men replied:

Criminality, or the act of sinning, always exposed the criminal to punishment; and this *liability to punishment*, or obnoxiousness to penal sufferings, is properly termed *guilt*. To me was *imputed* or *reckoned* the sin and the *guilt* of my own apostacy; and God also reckoned all my posterity as liable through my apostacy, as I was their representative, to suffer, by being born into a fallen state, in which their individual criminality was certain, and in which they would be righteously exposed to everlasting death, as well as all the miseries of earth. He did not impute *my guilt* to them as *their guilt*; but through my sin all were brought into a state in which no one had any original righteousness, no one had a title to everlasting life; all possessed a deteriorated moral nature and physical constitution, and all were exposed to such endless misery as should exactly correspond with their individual criminality. It was also true, that God deemed it proper to make infants suffer, who had not sinned after the similitude of my transgression, thus imputing to them *guilt* or *liability to suffering*, just as he also exposed the animal creation to suffering; that he might thereby manifest his holy displeasure against my sin and all actual transgressors. Even the elements of the material world, not capable of moral agency and of enduring penalties, experienced a shock, through my sin, and were rendered less propitious to man, and to the whole

race of animals. Before the apostacy, as in the millennium, the lion and the lamb lay down together; the pestilence never walked in darkness; no murrain was among the cattle; the seasons knew their respective places; no burning volcanoes deluged sleeping villages with lava; and no tempests rocked the ocean. Still, neither the cattle nor the elements were punished; but rebel man was chastised through their instrumentality. Even infants having sinned only in their representative, died, because God reckoned them justly liable to this evil; and had they not been redeemed by the second Adam, would never have entered the abodes of bliss.

Paul. Even thus the Spirit taught me, that "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." But those little infants, which died before they actually transgressed, have found that their terrestrial sufferings were ultimately no real punishment of themselves, for sanctified affliction is not an exercise of punitive justice.

As the apostle uttered these words I heard the voices of an approaching heavenly host, and lo! a choir of infant saints, innumerable as the stars in the milky way, passed before us, on a celestial tour to the new heaven and the new earth which had taken the place of the planet of their nativity. In sweet responses they sung, "Hallelujah to the Lamb, for he redeemed us from earth; and fitted us for heaven."

I gazed with rapture on them as they passed, and when I saw my own seraphic babes were there, and sweetly smiled on me as they passed, I wished myself at the foot of the throne again; and instantly was there,

praising him who, in his pilgrimage on earth, took little children in his arms, blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

My next interview was with two of these saved little ones; who were removed from earth before they were six months old, and had been in heaven forty years longer than myself. Before they were removed from me, they had never heard nor conceived of the soul, of death, of Adam, of God, of Christ, of sin, of salvation. We had begun, said they, to think of the objects of our perception, and had begun to know and love those who did us good: but the instant after death, we found that our powers of knowledge were wonderfully augmented; that we had been born with a depraved nature in consequence of our having sinned in our representative; that God reckoned us to be so connected with our foederal head the first Adam, as to be liable to all the miseries of a depraved world, and to such endless ruin as we should have merited by our own actual transgression; that God might have left us, without any injustice on his part, to the natural consequences of Adam's apostacy, and to the certain perdition which we should have individually merited; that Christ Jesus had redeemed us from our fallen state and depraved nature by his own obedience unto death; that in consequence of this redemption by Christ, we had been renewed in our souls, as some of the prophets who were sanctified from the womb, and that we were wholly indebted to our blessed Saviour for an early release from a sinful world, from a depraved nature, and that hell to which we should otherwise have sunk through the natural tendency of our evil predispositions of mind, and the temptations which would have surrounded us.

“ All glory to the Lamb for our salvation!’ they melodiously sung, and their parents responded, “ from the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained praise.”

All infants, who had died before they had actually transgressed, I found were in the same happy situation; so that it was really a favour to them, that God made Adam their representative in the state of probation, condemned them as falling in him, and then provided for their salvation in Christ; and I could clearly see, that had any infants died in their infancy who had not been *reckoned* by God to have fallen in Adam, they could not have been saved by Christ, for he came to seek and save none but those whom God *reckoned to be lost*. This imputation of *guilt* to infants, therefore, in consequence of the original sin of Adam their representative; and this actual suffering of death in consequence of their being *accounted* by God liable to it, is in every case overruled by God for the full and final salvation by Christ of all who die before they have been chargeable with criminality in their own personal conduct. Thus our God brings good out of that which is in itself evil, and makes the wrath of man to praise him.

Search, said these babes in Christ, search the world of spirits through, and however all might have been left of God to perish through the miserable consequences of the sin of our first parents, yet you will not find a single being in hell who had not become individually criminal; nor a single being in hell who is more miserable than he has made himself sinful.

How unreasonable, then, thought I, was all the clamour of the children of men against the doctrine of ori-

ginal sin; which might have been the final ruin of all men, but *of itself alone* was suffered to be the endless ruin of none!

Desiring further information on the subject of human depravity, I was present with David the sweet psalmist of Israel; and found him enditing heavenly poetry for some younger minstrels in heaven; for in the psalmody of the celestial world he seemed to be chief leader. I asked him what he intended when he said, "behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."—"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not harken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."

The sweet psalmist replied, that he had employed figurative language to express the real depravity of mankind, and the fact that all inherited from their first parents a nature prone to evil. Literal *poison* of asps was not under the tongue of sinners, nor was there any moral evil in the *shape* of a man's body; nor could children as soon as they were born *speak* any thing. Still, every child of Adam was brought into the world *in such a state, and subjected to such propensities*, that like Paul, it would have been reasonable for him to have confessed, "I know that in me (that is my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Every one knows, that in the world whence we came, all were inclined to evil, as the sparks naturally flew upwards; and that any thing holy and good seemed to result from a forced state of existence. Children without instruction or example would lie, so soon as they conceived of any advantage to be gained

by it; and it required the most attentive training to make them abstain from vicious practices. If there had not been in man a propensity to evil rather than to good, why did evil seem to be the spontaneous growth of the human heart, while holiness was never produced without gracious culture? The universality of this propensity to moral evil in preference to good, could certainly be accounted for upon no other principle than this, that Adam's children were born in his own likeness, after he became a degraded being, and were introduced into the world in that very state of sin and misery into which he had fallen. In such a *state* God had a perfect right to place the posterity of Adam. It was indeed a *state* of trial and degradation; but in this state the children of men were just as free in their agency as their first father was in his probation: and neither Adam nor any one of his children was ever under the *physical necessity* of doing any sinful action. Had Adam not sinned his posterity would not have been placed in such a state of trial; but having fallen, it pleased God that all his race should be introduced into such a state as that in which we existed before our regeneration;—a state in which we closed our ears against the voice of heavenly wisdom and freely chose evil, while we refused the good. We “were by nature children of wrath.”

This *relative situation* of every man after the apostacy, was not in itself a *crime*, for all criminality, or actual sin, consisted in some *moral agency*, which was a transgression of the law, and not in any *state* whatever; but it rendered the free, and voluntary rebellion of every man, who should attain to moral agency, absolutely *certain* to the divine mind; and God's placing

man in such a situation was no evil action, nor any production of sin on the part of the Deity, but a strong indication of his displeasure at the sin of Adam, and of all who imitated his example.

In this way the heavenly hosts seemed to me to account for the universal depravity of mankind, and to justify God in the connexion which his purpose and providence established between the sin of Adam and the condition and character of his descendants.

The doctrine of *the atonement* was a subject of much controversy on earth, not only between christians and socinians, but between eminently pious christian ministers. What do they think in heaven on this subject? thought I, to myself; and wishing to see my venerable father, who had on earth believed in a general atonement, in connexion with a particular redemption, we met with unspeakable rapture.

He was in company with one of his early friends, a man of gigantic form, well proportioned limbs, penetrating black eyes, and sweetly smiling features; whose face, nevertheless, characteristic of the imperfection of all sublunary attributes, was disfigured, while he was on earth, by a nose contemptible for its littleness. His terrestrial mind was like his face; a noble mind, distinguished by some defects, which were rendered the more conspicuous by the general symmetry of his intellectual powers. He had written a book about the *higher and lower ransom*, to show that the atonement was no atonement, and at the same time was both definite and indefinite, particular and universal.

In the heavenly state his defects of face and mind were all gone; and in his stature he seemed a prince among his fellows; as he was once a president with his pupils. We needed not an introduction.

At the moment of my arrival the Reverend Doctor ANDREW FULLER came also; for while he rejected titles on earth, he was truly *reverend*, and a *teacher* of divinity to younger saints in paradise.

I was glad of such a convention; for my father had deemed Fuller his pattern of orthodoxy; and had highly esteemed the writings of STUART and DANA, while *the picture* of an atonement by one MURDOCK, he reprobated as a *mockery of the sublimest reality* which heaven had ever conceived, or the universe witnessed.

These blessed men had no discordance now with one another; and none with their younger brother in the gospel, from whom they all had partially differed in life.

While they engaged in edifying discourse; not a few of the saints, who had been saved by their instrumentality, collected around them; and some of the holy angels hovered near, with bending forms, still delighting to look into the mysteries of redemption, and to hear the story of the Saviour's death from the tongues of ransomed sinners themselves.

“What was the atonement?” I desired to know of my beloved sire; and he responded, “the word atonement,” (for they are sound philologists in heaven,) “was properly used by our brother Paul,* to denote every thing which was done by our blessed Saviour on earth, in his vicarious obedience to the precepts of the law, and in his vicarious sufferings, to secure complete *reconciliation* between the just God, and all those persons who in time were actually reconciled to him. The

* Rom. v. 11.

word might have been rendered *reconciliation*; and then the term reconciliation denotes, *first*, the meritorious *cause* of our reconciliation to God; and *secondly*, the *state* of actual reconciliation, into which we were brought, in consequence of the matter of the atonement, or the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Christ. Hence Paul said, by the Spirit, to the Romans, who, together with himself, were justified by faith, and had peace with God, *when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, even for us; for God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; the matter of the atonement being really in existence, while we were unrenewed in the temper of our minds; much more being reconciled, being actually brought into the state of reconciliation, so as to have present peace with God, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, or reconciliation; both in its matter and application."*

"The atonement," said Fuller, "when by that term is intended the ground, or meritorious cause of actual reconciliation, was frequently spoken of in the bible as *the righteousness of one, which came upon all men that ever were justified, unto justification of life, and any obedience unto death, which had not secured unto all for whom that obedience was rendered actual justification unto life, would not have been any efficient, adequate, or real atonement.*"

“ I well remember,” said my father to Fuller, “ that having written some things not defensible in your early productions, you finally came, in your more mature moments to these scriptural conclusions, that Christ died as the *shepherd* for his *sheep*, as the *husband* for his *bride*, and as the *head* for the members of his mystical *body*, the church, which he purchased with his blood. Still, you thought the atonement in its own nature *sufficient* for all, but *intended* only for the people of God. In this opinion, on earth I concurred with you, as did thousands of our brethren who now surround the throne.”

Fuller replied, “ since I arrived in heaven I have learned, that to represent the atonement as having been *sufficient* for purposes for which *it was never intended* by God, is derogatory to the wisdom of our Heavenly King: is saying that it was sufficient, in a case in which no sufficiency was required; and so was sufficient, over and above its intended use, for an unbounded nothing. All the purposes Jehovah intended to answer by the atonement shall certainly be answered by it. It was sufficient to accomplish those ends, and no more. The lost, God did not design to save by the obedience and sufferings of his Son; and as he did not obey and suffer as their covenant head, or representative, or substitute, the atonement was not sufficient for their salvation; unless sinners could be saved, when no one bare their sins, and when no one rendered a vicarious righteousness for them; which would be a salvation without a Saviour. The very idea of saving men through the righteousness of their *substitute*, excludes the idea of the applicability of the righteousness of that substitute to any for whom he was not a substitute in the plan of

reconciliation. If his righteousness, who has become the Lord our Righteousness, and in whom we have strength and salvation, could have been sufficient for us, without its having been intentionally wrought for us by our Surety, then may salvation be granted without any vicarious obedience; and without a Saviour."

Here the former President asked, why may not the righteousness, or the holy obedience of our Redeemer, performed by him in the heavenly world; for he is still subject, as Mediator, unto the Father; be imputed unto his saints, as well as that obedience which he rendered before he left the earth, if the imputation of righteousness does not depend on the fact, that the imputed righteousness was intentionally wrought for him who receives it, by his substitute under the law?

Atonement, said he, I now clearly know was the meritorious cause of the *justification* of all who are saved, and is coextensive with that judicial proceeding; for whom God has freely pardoned, he has pardoned for Christ's sake; and every one whose sins he has forgiven, he has also accepted as righteous; as one who, in his substitute, rendered such an active obedience to the law in its form of a covenant of works, as was required to constitute him just. It is now clear, to my satisfaction, that the sufferings of Christ were finite in amount; and were in themselves, in equity, sufficient to answer the covenant purpose for which they were endured; but had our adorable Jesus done nothing more than merit pardon for his people, he would have been the author of no more than half a reconciliation. His active obedience is as necessary to our being accepted as righteous; and freed from a state of probation, and confirmed in holiness, as his passive obedience was to save us from the

punishment due to our sins. Could I have proved on earth, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ rendered the remission of all the sins of all sinful men practicable, it would have answered no purpose, unless I could also have established the point, that the representative obedience of Christ was rendered for all mankind, and was available for their being pronounced just with their Judge.

At the conclusion of this speech, we all sung, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one were many made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Hallelujah.

Widely different and contradictory were the opinions of the inhabitants of hell, on the subjects of original sin, the depravity of men, and the atonement.

I remembered, when on earth, a preacher of the doctrines of *fatalism and universal salvation*, and desiring to know how he still viewed his former opinions, I was instantly beside him; and found in his company an old *Deist* whom I recognized as formerly a most profane scoffer. They were fiercely engaged in controversy; but both turned their eyes on me at my approach. They cursed me at once for a hypocritical priest, and one of the elected favourites of heaven.

“Are you both lost?” said I.

“Why were you elected to eternal life?” responded the Universalist: “tell me that.”

“God was partial,” cried the Deist: “he was a respecter of persons; for he made you a believer by his

constraining grace, and left me to perish under his decree of reprobation. Had he given me everlasting life on earth I would have desired no more."

Were not you both dumb? demanded I, in the day of final judgment. "Yes," they replied, "for he overpowered, without convincing us: his terrors made us afraid; but now we have a little liberty of disputation again; and Oh! what a hell have we in our controversy with each other; and how do we seek momentary gratification in disquisition, merely to inflame our wretched spirits! Give us but a drop of water now, to cool our tongue: give us a little discourse that may please us. Curse God now, a moment with us; and that will ease us."

How can I curse one, said I, whom I supremely love, and who is altogether lovely? You are, indeed, in the state in which I expected to find you; for you were warned, that he who did not believe should be damned. In my heart I *pity* you, much as you *deserve* your woe.

"None of your preaching here," exclaimed the Universalist, "for you and I both did enough of that in the other world." "But I," said the Deist, "rarely troubled myself to hear any of your prating," and as they uttered these sayings they filled the air with wailings, and gnashed on me with their teeth.

Let us discourse calmly and philosophically, said I; ("calmness in hell!" they both muttered,) for when you were on earth you gloried in your candour and philosophy. I admit, that I was a sinner; that I deserved everlasting death; but God chose to have mercy on me, and therefore he saved me. I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ with a cordial and practical faith. This faith in me resulted from the presentation of truth to

my mind, and the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost, exciting my attention to that truth, and sweetly constraining me to embrace it. Had I been left to myself I should not have acted, probably, a wiser part than yourselves.

“Then God,” they interposed, “did more for you than for others; and so you were saved by *discriminating* grace.”

That is all true, I answered, and all the saints who once on earth could sincerely sing,

“Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there’s room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”

are delightfully employed now in ascribing their salvation to the grace of the Eternal. We are saved because the Lord, in his unspeakable goodness was pleased to provide and apply the means of pardon, sanctification, and glorification.

“Yes, yes,” cried the Universalist, “we know that all of you were saved according to the detested doctrines of divine sovereignty, electing love, definite atonement, unmerited regeneration, certain perseverance through preserving grace, and justification by the righteousness of Christ. But how can this comfort us in the regions of the damned?”

“Ah! miserable men!” I exclaimed, “who can hope to *comfort* those whom the holy and merciful God does not think fit to comfort? But I would know of you, if you were not perfectly free agents in all your moral conduct on earth.”

“Free agents? yes, as free as we are now; and it is

our boast, that we act from our own unconstrained choice. I always did, and I always will do," said the Deist, "what I please; so far as the powers that are above do not prevent me."

Were either of you ever penitent for your sins? Did you ever truly pray God to have mercy on you? Did you ever desire to be saved from sin and its merited punishment? Are you now willing to obey God; and if not, pray, what *injustice* has the Lord done you? Grace saved the pardoned sinners of our race, and justice damned the lost. Yet the grace of God, manifested in saving those whom he formed vessels of honour, to show forth his mercy, did no *injustice* to those who are not the subjects of it. You have not forgotten the parable of the labourers, nor the meaning of him who said, 'Friend, I do thee no wrong:—take that thine is, and go thy way:—is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?'

Would you gladly embrace the Lord Jesus now as your King?

At this juncture an aged form, with hoary locks, piercing eye, and grave deportment, the wonted flames of Tophet darting from every member of his withered body, came in pursuit of the Universalist and the Deist, to discuss with them his Socinian notions of the Bible, of Christ and salvation.

"Be saved," exclaimed he, "by the merits of another! Be pardoned through the sufferings of Jesus! No! never! *Thou* oughtest to be ashamed of holding a place in heaven in virtue of the righteousness of Christ, instead of meriting happiness by thine own obedience. I will sing him no hosannah. That man above was no Deity: his Bible did much mischief; and his Bible

Societies were the machinery of hireling priests, for working the people into every absurd belief; that laymen might be constrained to support hordes of harpies and their Theological Seminaries. My friend *the Reformer* did them ample justice."

Here the Deist and Universalist shouted horrible praise to their coadjutor, and demanded why he had not converted all of his straight-laced denomination on earth to his rational and liberal Christianity.

The grace of God, said I, put bounds to his influence; however it coincided with the depravity of fallen human nature; and brought many who occasionally listened to his infidelity, to know and love the true *Light*, which more or less illuminated every man. *That the purpose of God according to election might stand*, many of his hearers were kept from his pernicious ways; *were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love; were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, and had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; and are completely saved.* That grace, which you all still contemn, has peopled heaven with a multitude which surpasses all powers of human computation; while justice has sentenced a comparatively small minority of the whole human race, to be miserable every where, so long as they continue wicked, which will be for ever; and just as miserable as their sins on earth were numerous and aggravated.

"For ever! for ever!" they all cried with ghastly features; and blasphemed God, looking upwards until a storm of wrath, with the noise of many thunders, and

suddenly as lightning, burst upon them and swept them away in a deluge of fire and brimstone, which the breath of the Almighty kindled.

Instantly I was before the throne of the Lamb again in humble adoration: "and a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him."

My next doctrinal disquisition was with a brother in Jesus whom I had known and loved in the life that was past, even while I did not deem him a profound or consistent divine in his youth. He had the root of the matter in him; but wanted judgment to ballast his speculations, which sometimes took him away in a gale. But God brought him back from the boundless ocean of floating theories. He had a new heart, while he did not theorize well about it; and he loved and served the Lord Jesus Christ as his God and Saviour, even before he could discern the *strict justice* of God in justifying the ungodly. We were both saved by that grace which reigned through righteousness; and now in the heavenly state he understood the subject; for while borne in a chariot of glory on an excursion round the little worlds, Ceres, Pallas, Juno and Vesta, which were last discovered by mortals of our native planetary system, we perfectly agreed in the following outline of

RETROSPECTIVE THEOLOGY.

One, uncreated, spiritual essence, called the Godhead; possessing an inherent, threefold distinction, which laid the foundation for tripersonal relations and operations, always was, and will be.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, possessing this one undivided essence, are the Godhead, which is the sole proper object of worship, whether he be addressed under one form of personal subsistence and manifestation or another.

There are not three Gods, nor three distinct and separate minds, or spirits; but there is one God subsisting and acting in a threefold manner.

Before the birth of Jesus Christ the Godhead had no permanent, visible form; but the Son from time to time assumed a visible, angelic appearance for the purpose of revealing the will of God to men.

The Godhead created all substances besides himself, which have being; and for his pleasure they are, and were created; he being moved to their formation by infinitely wise, good and holy motives, found in his own mind, and derived from his own nature.

Whatever Jehovah has done, he ever *intended* to do, so that he *predestinated* the whole of his own conduct; and his government extended, in a way suited to the objects of it, to all his creatures and all their actions.

By executing his own predestinated works, Jehovah *foreordained* all events which came to pass on earth; and so rendered *certain* their occurrence in the very way in which they *did* occur, whether by the free, vol-

untary, efficient, agency of man, or otherwise; without rendering any moral action the result of *compulsion* or *physical necessity*.

The certain *foreordination* and *foreknowledge* of the *future existence* of every moral action, of every man, did in no wise interfere with the freedom of human agency, or render any man's good or evil thoughts, feelings, words, and actions less his own proper efficiency.

By the appointment of God, the first man Adam was made the head, and in the matter of the primary probation, the *representative*, of all his posterity by *ordinary* generation; the man Christ Jesus, of an *extraordinary* generation, alone being not represented by him.

The first man Adam, being left in a state of entire freedom of moral agency, and having faculties which he could employ according to his own choice, in doing good or evil, did transgress the commandment of his Maker.

In the moment of his transgression, Adam became in God's sight spiritually and legally dead; and this legal death subjected him to a variety of evils; especially to the dissolution of his soul and body, and to the everlasting displeasure of his God.

Every child of Adam (Jesus only excepted) born after Adam's apostacy, was in his native estate, destitute of original righteousness, because Adam, his representative in the great probation, did not render that original righteousness; was liable to the miseries of life; was disinclined to good; was prone to evil; was exposed to the temptations of the devil; and, if he arrived at the period of moral agency, did evil according

to his depraved nature; without ever performing any morally good actions, until renewed in the disposition of his soul by the Spirit of God.

The reason why Jehovah caused all men to be brought into the world in this estate of misery and depravity, rather than in such a state of innocence and probation as Adam experienced, was the connexion which subsisted in nature, and in the divine arrangement between Adam and his posterity; Jehovah deeming it advisable to prove the first man as the representative of his race; and subsequently to *reckon* them as being virtually tried and fallen in their progenitor; that he might at once exhibit the new and better covenant of life than the one made with innocent, but not immutable Adam.

Without any impeachment of divine justice, wisdom and goodness, the whole of mankind might have been left in their native state of misery and depravity, to experience all the evils which would have resulted from their actual transgressions.

All the sufferers in hell *are actual transgressors*, and were so before they were consigned to their present state; in which there is an exact and equitable apportionment of penal sufferings to individual criminality.

This righteous punishment of all the lost was due to the truth and essential justice of the divine nature, and is such *vengeance* as becomes the holy God: it being no more possible that he should fail of vindicating his own rights, than that he should lie, or neglect his own honour as the moral Governor of the universe.

All who are in heaven, that descended from the first Adam, sinned representatively in him; and all but

those who died before they attained to moral agency, sinned wilfully, after the similitude of Adam's transgression: but Jehovah does not punish them, as in equity he might have done, had he not pardoned them, and accepted them as righteous.

The reason why Jehovah does not punish the saints who are in heaven is, that by a divine and gracious constitution, he appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to be their head and representative, under the violated law, just as he appointed the first Adam the representative of all his race in a state of probation; and when Jesus performed the work of a substitute for his people, being made under the law, he suffered the punishment of their sins, and rendered a perfect active obedience in their stead; so that God forgave them for Christ's sake; and for Christ's sake judicially accepted them as righteous. Hence God *reckons*, in a judicial manner, all the saints to have obeyed and suffered, in their representative, all which the law as a covenant of works, required of them, considered as apostate men, for their justification, adoption and glorification.

The sufferings of Christ were not the *identical* pains which his redeemed ones would have suffered, for they were his own sufferings endured for them.

His *person* was, under the law, both in regard to precept and penalty, a *substitute* for the *persons* of all the saved ones; and his *sufferings* were a *substitute* for their merited *sufferings*; and were in the divine estimation, a strictly equitable equivalent for the same.

The holy God in giving his law to man and in denouncing strictly legal punishment against every transgressor for every transgression, contemplated this very substitution, and, by his law and gospel in connexion,

taught man, that every person who sinned, should die the death, either in his own person, or in that of his substitute. That such a substitute was contemplated in the threatening, however, Adam did not know until the seed of the woman was promised. The *sufferings*, as well as the *active obedience* of Christ in behalf of his people, were just such as the equity of God, and the divinely understood meaning of the law of God, denouncing the curse, required that they should be, in order that he might completely save his people. The *nature* and the *amount* of our Lord's sufferings, as the representative of his people were not determined in an arbitrary manner; but by the essential justice of God, and the measure of penalty incurred by those persons, whose covenant head and legal representative he was, both in his active and passive obedience.

That he might thus render, as a representative, such obedience to the precept and the penalty of the law, as he did not owe for himself, it was necessary that the Redeemer should be more than a mere creature; that he should be God and man, of two distinct natures and one person: and such a person was Jesus Christ.

To render this *requisite obedience*, and endure this *requisite suffering*, vast in amount beyond the comprehension of finite beings, and dignified as the glorious person who gave his life a ransom for his Church, yet measurable by divine justice, and equivalent to the objects which they were intended to accomplish, the Son of God became man; and finished the definite work of redeeming his people which his Father assigned him to perform.

The full reward, which Jesus as Redeemer has *merited*, by obeying the precept and suffering the penalty

of the law, he shall for ever receive, in seeing his seed, the travail of his soul, in the mansions which he prepared for them. He humbled himself; wherefore God has highly exalted him: and every sinner, the punishment of whose sins by a legal substitution he bare in his own body on the cross, shall for ever be a jewel in his royal diadem.

That the Redeemer might be thus rewarded, every human being in heaven was, before his departure from earth, made the subject of a great moral revolution in the disposition, inclinations, propensities, and moral operations of his soul, through the agency of the Holy Ghost.

This change in each one, ordinarily effected by the instrumentality of the gospel, took place at such a time, in such a manner, and through the application of such means, as God had foreordained; yet the operation of the Holy Spirit in effecting this change did not interfere with the free agency of any saved sinner.

In the moment of time, in which each saint was thus savingly changed, God actually pardoned the sins of each, accepted of him as righteous through the active righteousness of Christ, adopted him into his family, and commenced a process of sanctification, whereby he was fitted for the skies.

All the sufferings ever endured by the saints on earth were overruled for their good, and so ought to be esteemed fatherly corrections, and not punishments; while all the temporal evils of the lost were a part of the merited penalty of sin.

The gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost were all bestowed on the saved ones, as a reward to the Mediator for his mediatorial services; and hence *the Spirit* is

the Spirit of Christ, and, in the economy of redemption, is subordinate to the Son, as the Son is to the Father.

Yes, we are Christ's, and Christ is God's, said my companion in bliss; and with such sentiments we returned to the great white throne, hand in hand, and in the circle of millions of ransomed sinners, renewed the song:

“Worthy is the Lamb.”

