

THE
Presbyterian Magazine.

MARCH, 1822.

Communications.

FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

ON OUR DUTIES TO GOD.

The ancient philosophers divided morality according to the principles from which it springs. In modern times, however, those who have attempted a treatise on the offices or duties, to the performance of which human nature is obligated, have spoken of them in regard to the objects on which they terminate. A three-fold division has been made and adopted; viz. Our duties to God—to our fellow men—and to ourselves.

In this essay, my design is to say a few things on the first class. I would not venture to indulge in abstruse and unprofitable speculations, but simply notice a few of the leading duties, as they stand connected with practical piety. That this subject is one of primary importance, must be evident to every mind, after a moment's reflection. Did not God create us? Has he not preserved us? Has he not heaped on our heads the bounties of his providence? And, above all, did he not send his own dear Son to atone for the sins of men? Therefore, it is our place to inquire, with humility and earnestness, what our duties are to our heavenly Sovereign.

1. It is our duty, first to believe with all our hearts, that God exists, that he governs the world, and observes the conduct of the children of men. To the doctrine that there is a Divine Being, almost all men, in this day, seem prepared to subscribe. Few have the brazen effrontery to stand forth, and deny what is recommended to the reason of man by arguments so powerful and convincing. But we fear that many, who thus profess a belief in this fundamental doctrine of every thing like religion, content themselves with mere speculation. Their faith, in the words of a poet,

“Plays round the head, but comes not near the heart.”

VOL. II.—*Presb. Mag.*

N

Destitute of the grace of faith, he, in the strictest sense of the term, cannot believe in Jesus. And yet he feels a strong disposition to embrace the Saviour. But after the Spirit renews the sinner, the Sun of Righteousness shines into his mind, and in this light he perceives the loveliness of Jesus, and this loveliness presents sufficient inducement to volition. He now has intellectual power to know Jesus, and active power to embrace him, and therefore he believes.

Such is the experience of plain, unmetaphysical Christians, as far as I am acquainted with them. And this experience refutes the sentiment under investigation.

Thus I think I have proved that the distinction of mental powers, into natural and moral, and that sinners have natural, but not moral, ability, to render acceptable obedience to God, is unsupported by philosophy, and scripture, and experience.

That the distinction is used by some writers, and in daily conversation, I readily admit. I once advocated the sentiment. But the use of it, is no certain proof of its correctness. What is more common, in the polite and fashionable world, than the sentence, "He is not at home?" But is it true?

I cannot, is common, in regard to a thousand subjects. But when designed to communicate the idea of what is called moral inability, I would pronounce it a metaphysical falsehood: and no logic nor metaphysics can demonstrate it to be any thing else.

The substitute I would propose is simple. Away with *I cannot*, from the vocabulary of Christians, in the metaphysical sense that some men use it, and insert, *It is not convenient*.

The strictures shall be reserved till another occasion. I have given only the outlines of my views on this subject, which are intended for publication in another form, at some future period.

J. F.

FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

AN ANSWER TO THE TWO QUERIES PROPOSED BY DISCIPULUS,
AND PUBLISHED IN THE LAST NUMBER.

The first query is thus expressed: "In the petition 'forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' are we not taught to entreat of God pardon for our sins, without any reference to the payment of the penalty, by Christ, in our stead? If I forgive a man who owes me a debt, I do it without having received an equivalent from another; otherwise I attach a wrong idea to the term *forgive*; and if the word *as*, in the text, means *in like manner*, does it not teach, that the pardon is granted to the sinner *freely*, by our Father in heaven?"

This query consists of two distinct questions, one respecting

our conduct in prayer ; the other relating to the conduct of God in dispensing pardon. They rest on very different grounds.

In reply to the first branch of this query, we submit the following remarks.

That Jesus Christ did die in the stead of his people, and thus endure, in their place, the penalty of the law, is plainly and fully asserted in the sacred scriptures. "I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd, giveth his life for the sheep." John x. 11. "For he hath made him to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. "Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being made a *CURSE* for us." Gal. iii. 13. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body, on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." 1 Pet. ii. 24. But on this point it is unnecessary to insist, because it is conceded by the author of the queries. He admits the fact ; but asks whether we are not taught, in the petition he quotes, "to entreat God to pardon our sins *without any reference to the payment of the penalty*, by Christ, in our stead."

This being taken for granted, that Christ actually paid the penalty due to us on account of sin, it follows as a necessary consequence, that God has respect to his atoning death, when he remits sin to any of the human race ; for it would be an absurdity, utterly unbecoming the wisdom of the divine government, to admit of the vicarious death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners, and yet dispense pardon to them without reference to that great sacrifice which was appointed for the express purpose of rendering the bestowment of this invaluable blessing consistent with the honour due to the law and justice of God. Accordingly we find it attributed, by the inspired writers, to the satisfaction of Christ. "He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. "In whom we have redemption, through his *blood*, the *forgiveness of sins*, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE." Ephes. i. 7. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for *Christ's sake* hath forgiven you." Eph. iv. 32.

Now, as it is a fact that God has reference to the atonement of Christ, in the remission of sins, and actually does bestow this blessing for the sake of Christ ; and as he has plainly revealed this fact, can it be doubted, whether we ought to have reference to the propitiation of our blessed Saviour, in seeking the remission of our offence ? The great medium through which this and all other benefits are conveyed to us, is distinctly made known ; and shall we pay no regard to that medium ? The illustrious harbinger of the Redeemer cries in our ears, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ;"

and shall we turn away our eyes from this all-attractive object? This were to oppose the very design for which the propitiation of Christ is exhibited: for speaking of him, the apostle says, "Whom hath God SET FORTH to be a *propitiation for sin*, through *faith* in his blood, to DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he MIGHT BE JUST, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26. In this delightful passage, we are taught both what respect God has to the death of Christ in remitting sin, and the respect which we should have to that astonishing event. Jehovah we see has made an exhibition of this propitiation for the purpose of showing forth his *righteousness* in bestowing on sinners a full and complete pardon of all their transgressions, and to demonstrate to the world, that, while he restores rebels to his favour, and blesses them with a title to eternal life, he is still a *just*, as well as a merciful God. We are also taught, that, if we would obtain the forgiveness of our sins, *we* must look by faith to the *blood of Christ*; or to change the metaphor, and use his own language, if we desire to secure to ourselves eternal life, we must "*eat* his flesh and *drink* his blood." John vi. 54. In the whole of our Christian race, it behoves, as the apostle teaches us in Heb. xii. 2. to be "*looking unto* Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith;" and in compliance with the exhortation of Jude, (v. 21.) we are to be looking for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

If then we are to have such continual respect to the merits of Christ, it can hardly be supposed that this reference to him is to be laid aside while we are engaged in the solemn duty of prayer. Then, while presenting ourselves before a holy God, if ever, we need to look to this mercy-seat. How can we endure the brightness of his glory, unless we behold it attempered to the weakness of our vision in the face of his Son? If we forget that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" 2 Cor. v. 19; if we forget that he can receive the vilest offender to his favour, through the propitiation of his Son; what encouragement can we have to pray? Forget the sacrifice of Immanuel in prayer! How is it possible? Can we address Jehovah, and not remember that glorious Mediator through whom we derive the inestimable privilege of approaching to a throne of grace? Is it not our duty to praise God for his marvellous love in giving his Son to die, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life?" Is it not our duty to thank God, that, through the propitiation of Christ, he is righteous, while he remits sin, and just when he justifies him that believeth in Jesus? Is it not our duty to plead with God to grant us the remission

of our sins, in this way so illustrative at once of his mercy and of his justice?

But the querist feels a difficulty arising from a petition in the Lord's prayer. It is this: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:" and he grounds on it this question: "Are we not taught to entreat God to pardon our sins *without any reference* to the payment of the penalty, by Christ, in our stead?" After what has been said, we may at once conclude, that we are taught no such thing in this petition; because, if this were fact, then one part of scripture would contradict another. But not to rest our answer here, we observe, that, to any one inspecting the petition, it will be evident that it says not a word about the payment of the penalty due to our sins, by Christ; and consequently that it does not, in plain terms, prohibit a regard to that which it does not even mention. The whole difficulty then that presents itself to the view of the Querist, in looking at this petition, seems to arise from the *omission* of an injunction or direction, to pray for pardon with a reference to the atoning death of our Redeemer. But it ought to be recollected, that we are not to expect to find in any single page of the Bible, and much less in a single sentence, the whole system of a Christian's faith and duty. The entire prayer, although admirably constructed, yet does not exhibit a *complete directory* for the duty of prayer. While we regard it as a special rule, we believe, as we are taught in our Shorter Catechism, that "the whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer;" and that if we had no other information than what may be derived from this admirable form, we should not know how to perform this important duty, in the way in which Christians are taught to perform it. If we look through this directory, we shall find not one word of *thanksgiving*; and shall we conclude from this omission, that thanksgiving is not to be mingled with our petitions? Let the apostle answer. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS, *giving thanks* to God and the Father BY HIM." Col. iii. 17. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing *give thanks*: for this is the will of God IN CHRIST JESUS concerning you." 1 Thes. v. 17; 18.

Look at it again, and you will find it contains no direction to pray *in the name* of Christ; it does not even mention his name; and shall we infer from this omission, that we are not to pray in the name of Christ? He himself, in a subsequent part of his ministry, explicitly taught his disciples their duty in this particular. "In that day," said he to his disciples in his farewell conversation with them, "ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you. HITHERTO ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may

be full." John xvi. 23, 24. "At that day ye shall ask in my name." ver. 26.

Through Jesus Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father:* and it is as plain as words can make it, that it is our duty to pray to God *in the name of Christ*. Now, what is meant by praying in the name of Christ? Certainly, not barely mentioning his name in prayer. We are not to expect that his name will operate as a *charm*; and that God will hear us merely because we repeat the name of Christ. It prescribes a duty, the performance of which requires intelligence and faith. To pray in Christ's name is, to acknowledge that we derive the privilege of approaching the throne of grace, through his mediation; it is to render affectionate thanksgiving to God, for the work which he undertook and accomplished; it is to rely upon his atonement and righteousness, for the acceptance of our person and services; it is to look for every blessing, as coming through him the appointed channel of saving mercy to sinful men; it is, in short, to regard him as our great *High Priest*; by the blood of whose sacrifice we have boldness to enter into the holiest, to the very mercy-seat of God, and by the fragrance of whose all-prevailing intercession, our polluted services of prayer and praise, may ascend as a sweet smelling savour to Jehovah. Heb. x. 19—22.

In the SECOND BRANCH of the Query, the author assumes different ground. He has respect to the conduct of God in dispensing pardon. His question is founded on the supposition, that the acceptance of the payment of the penalty, by Christ, is inconsistent with the notion of a *free forgiveness of sin*. "If I forgive a man," he observes, "who owes me a debt, I do it without having received an equivalent from another; otherwise I attach a wrong idea to the term *forgive*: and if the word *as*, in the text, means *in like manner*, does it not teach, that the pardon is granted to the sinner *freely*, by our Father in heaven?" By the term *freely* is manifestly conveyed the idea, that God, in granting pardon, has no respect to the satisfaction of Christ; and that if he had respect to it, the favour granted would not be properly a *forgiveness of sin*.

In the reply to the first branch of this query, it has been shown, that remission of sin was procured by the blood of Christ; that God certainly has respect to this precious blood when he bestows the favour; and that still it is styled *forgiveness*. John in his first epistle, (chap. i. 7.) expressly asserts, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and yet in the 9th verse he says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sins, and to cleanse us from all

* Ephes. ii. 18.

unrighteousness :” and in the 2d chap. ver. 1, 2, he encourages us under a sense of guilt, and inspires us with the hope of obtaining the forgiveness of sin, in answer to prayer, by reminding us of the *intercession* and *atonement* of Christ: “If any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

In the apprehension of the sacred writers, this mode of granting pardon and salvation to sinners, so far from derogating from the mercy of God, or lessening the obligations of those who receive the blessings, greatly increases the one, and unutterably magnifies the other. “In this,” says John, “was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the *propitiation for our sins.*” 1 John iv. 9, 10. In the same strain, Paul celebrates divine love to sinners, which he considers as surpassing every other exhibition of love: “But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST DIED *for us.*” Rom. v. 8. In these encomiums on the love of God, the apostles only copied after the example of Christ, who had before said in his conversation with Nicodemus, “God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.

Now, as the sacred writers teach the doctrine of the *forgiveness* of sins, and inform us that the blessing is granted in consideration of the satisfaction of Christ; and as they represent the love of God, in bestowing this and other benefits of salvation, as surpassing every other exhibition of love and mercy, and transcending all praise; if we only allow them, while writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to have understood the language they used, we must indubitably conclude, that the forgiveness of sin, through the medium appointed by infinite wisdom, is *perfectly FREE and gratuitous.*

The sinner has done nothing to merit it; he has forfeited every claim to mercy; he deserves everlasting punishment. It was not his wisdom that found out the plan of redemption; he did not provide a Saviour; nor did he even sue for mercy. Christ died for him, while an obstinate rebel. The infinite wisdom of Jehovah devised the amazing scheme of salvation. God himself provided the Mediator between Heaven and earth; and appointed his *own Son* to that painful office. From his *own Son* he exacted the penalty of the law; and when all the demands of justice were thus answered, he, in mercy, offered forgiveness to sinners. But who accept the all-gracious offer? Not one of our rebel-race, till God subdues his rebellious heart by his grace, and makes him willing to take what, till that moment, he

had refused. Is there not grace, infinite grace in all this? Is not forgiveness, thus granted, perfectly *free* and gratuitous?

But the Querist asks, "If I forgive a man who owes me a debt, I do it without having received an equivalent from another; otherwise I attach a wrong idea to the term *forgive*." Certainly, in pecuniary transactions, the acceptance of an equivalent, and the forgiveness of a debt, are utterly inconsistent; and equally certain would it be, if, in the petition referred to, the term "*as*" meant "*in like manner*," without an equivalent, that "pardon is granted to the sinner *freely*," that is, *without an equivalent*, "by our Father in heaven; forgiveness for the sake of Christ's satisfaction would not, in this sense, be *free*. But we have seen this cannot be the meaning; because it would militate against the plainest instructions of scripture in relation to the mode in which Jehovah actually does bestow remission of sin. It simply means that we cannot expect forgiveness from God, unless *we* grant forgiveness to our fellow creatures. The import of the petition in the mouth of one who uses it acceptably, is, we conceive, this: "Father I forgive my debtors; therefore, be thou pleased in mercy to forgive my debts."

Between a pecuniary debt and a debt contracted by sin, there is a resemblance in this particular, that both impose an obligation of payment. The man who owes money is bound to satisfy the demand of his creditor; and so the sinner is bound to satisfy the demands of divine justice. But, in other respects, there is a great difference. The parties, in the two cases, are widely different. In the one they are two private individuals; in the other, a creature and his Creator: and consequently the relations are immensely different; in the one, the relation of two private persons; in the other, the relation subsisting between offending man and the Sovereign Lawgiver and Supreme Judge of the universe. A creditor is obliged by the laws of his country to receive payment, unless he intends to remit his claim, whether it be tendered by the debtor, or by his friend; and the law of God binds him, in certain circumstances, by that love which it requires us to entertain for our neighbour, to forgive the debt, when the debtor is unable to pay it. But Jehovah is bound by no law to accept of the payment of the penalty of sin, by any except the offender himself: and were it possible for a sinner to point out one who was able and willing to become his substitute, and make full satisfaction for his guilt, his Sovereign might refuse to accept of the substitute, and insist on payment from the transgressor himself. The payment of a pecuniary debt, whether made by the debtor, or by another for him, is followed by an immediate release from all the claims of his creditor: but the effects of the payment of a penal debt, by a surety, can be controlled by the pleasure of our great Sovereign,

who has a right, on accepting of a surety, to prescribe what conditions in relation to the application of his vicarious work, as to the number to be redeemed, and the time and circumstances of their becoming participants in its benefits, he may deem most conducive to the glorious purposes of his moral government over the universe.

From these remarks, it will be seen, that, if it had been possible for our fallen race to have devised a plan for their redemption, and to have found a surety, who was competent to effect their salvation, it would have been an act of signal grace in our offended Sovereign to have accepted of his mediation. But when we consider that this was utterly beyond their power, and that the whole contrivance originated in the unsearchable wisdom of God; that HE discovered one able and mighty to help a ruined world; and that the person, from whom he exacted the vast debt of justice, was none other than his *own co-equal Son*; how immensely great appears his grace, and from what a boundless ocean of love must it have flowed! In respect to the sinner, forgiveness is perfectly *free*; for, so far from offering an equivalent for his debt of 10,000 talents, he offers *nothing*.

The analogies between human and divine transactions are always faint and defective. But let us suppose a number of subjects in a kingdom, where the monarch has full control over its treasury, to be indebted to the public, and after prosecution by law to be thrown into prison. The king hears of their situation; he pities their distress; he determines to release them. But he is unwilling the public interest should suffer by the exercise of his compassion; he therefore directs his son to take out of his private purse what may be necessary to extinguish their debts, and to pay it into the public treasury; and then to release those unfortunate men. We ask, is there not as much, and more favour shown to these subjects, by their monarch, in this exercise of generosity, than there would have been, if he had at once discharged them, at the expense of the public? The king of the Locrians enacted a law, that the adulterer should lose both his eyes. His own son was the first offender convicted of this abominable crime. What a struggle now ensued between the integrity of the *magistrate* and the feelings of the *father*! He wished to save his son from the dreadful punishment of blindness; but justice forbade him to spare the culprit without satisfying the demands of the law. In these painful circumstances, he adopted the resolution of maintaining the integrity of the judge, and yet of gratifying the heart of the parent. He directed one of the eyes of his son to be taken out, and then gave up one of his own. In this way the honour of his law was upheld, and the certainty of the execution of its penalty upon all transgressors established. Who is not con-

vinced, that, in this transaction, there was a more illustrious display of parental love, than there would have been, if yielding to the weakness of a father, he had forgiven his son, at the expense of the just claims of his law ?

Had it been consistent with the glory of Jehovah's moral government over the universe, to remit sin without a satisfaction to the demands of his law and justice, there would have been grace in every bestowment of this blessing. But, as such a mode of forgiveness was inadmissible, and the whole race of man would have perished forever, unless the Monarch of creation had been willing to part with the Son of his bosom, and subject him to the deepest humiliation and the most dreadful sufferings for sinners, in order to open the way for an honourable exercise of mercy to them; can it be doubted for a moment that the bestowment of forgiveness to rebels, who have done nothing to merit this, or any other favour, is the highest demonstration of the love of God to his creatures, and the richest display of pardoning grace, that it is possible for created intelligence to conceive? The apostle, who gloried in nothing but the cross of Christ, always dwelt with rapture on this subject. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. iii. 4—7. This will eternally be the theme of the redeemed, who will for ever sing: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6.

J. J. J.

(*To be continued.*)

FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

ON AFFECTATION.

"Be not wise in your own conceits."—ROM. xii. 16.

Affectation may be defined, an attempt to appear in a character, which we have no title to assume. It is nearly allied to vanity; and springs, generally, from a defective or bad education.

This weakness, it may be observed, very often appears in the conduct of those, whose mental improvement has not kept pace with the increase of their wealth. Such characters often become dogmatical in their opinions—and overbearing in their manners

THE
Presbyterian Magazine.

APRIL, 1822.

Communications.

FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

HISTORICAL REMARKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

It is generally known that the Presbyterian Church differs from some other denominations, in her views of the Lord's Supper, and in her mode of administering it. It is proposed, in the following paper, to give a very brief sketch of the history of this ordinance, chiefly in reference to these points of difference. Other points will not be noticed; not only for the sake of brevity; but also because there is, concerning them, little diversity either of sentiment or of practice among Christians.

The Lord's Supper has been sometimes said to be the gospel epitomized and embodied. It does, indeed, present to the eye of faith, a lively, striking, and practical *synopsis of evangelical truth*. And it will generally be found to be a delightful and edifying ordinance to the communicant, just in proportion to the degree in which the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by faith in his blood, are dear to his heart. And, on the other hand, just in proportion as professing Christians, either disbelieve the divinity and atonement of the Saviour; or, while they acknowledge them in words, make little of them in practice, will the Lord's Supper, either lose its interest altogether, or be turned into an idol, and become itself an object of superstitious worship, instead of serving as a memorial of spiritual blessings, and a medium of approach to the proper object of worship, of confidence, and of supreme love. The truth of this remark is at once confirmed and exemplified, by the *Socinians* on the one hand, and by the *Papists* on the other. With the former, the holy communion loses almost all its meaning and its value, because all the great truths which it presupposes and represents, are denied.—With the latter, while they speak much of the merits of Christ, the humble and simple

VOL. II.—*Presb. Mag.*

T

of her members before the Christian era. And she was not so governed, in any of her branches, till long after the apostolic age. To make all the male members, or all these in conjunction with females, rulers, is subversive of the fundamental principles of good government, and proper subordination. And the pastors never governed the church as her *exclusive* rulers.

That the government of the church is committed, by her great Head, to ministers and a select number of men called ruling elders, I shall argue from analogy, from the government of the Jewish church, and from the New Testament scriptures.

(*To be continued.*)

AN ANSWER TO THE TWO QUERIES PROPOSED BY DISCIPULUS
AND PUBLISHED IN THE NUMBER PRECEDING THE LAST.

(*Continued from page 125.*)

The reference to the satisfaction of Christ, both by Jehovah in dispensing forgiveness of sin, and by the penitent in asking it, does not belong exclusively to the Christian dispensation. It has been connected with every economy of divine grace established for the benefit of this sinful world. The principle has been brought into full view, since the advent of our blessed Redeemer; but it may be discovered in its operation, amid the shadows that obscured the condition of the church, before he came, as the Sun of Righteousness, to chase away the darkness that still limited the vision of his people.

The way of salvation has certainly been but one and the same from the beginning of the world. It would be absurd to suppose that believers under the present dispensation are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but that the pious under preceding economies were redeemed by a less, ~~posay~~ sacrifice: for if one less costly than the death of the Son of God, could have sufficed for the salvation of those who lived before his advent, it would doubtless have been sufficient for our salvation; and consequently his humiliation and sufferings might have been dispensed with, and the world would never have beheld that amazing spectacle—the exhibition of which was commenced in the stable at Bethlehem, and finished on Mount Calvary. “For,” says Paul, “if there had been a law given that could have given life, verily, righteousness should have been by the law.” Gal. iii. 21. And again, “If righteousness came by the law, then *Christ* is dead IN VAIN.” ii. 21. In that memorable passage adduced in our former paper, this apostle tells us, that “God hath set forth” his Son to be “a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that are *past* ;” that is, the sins of those who had lived

and died before the manifestation of Christ to the world by his incarnation and death. And in language still plainer he teaches us the same truth, in his epistle, to the Hebrews: "For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first testament*, they which are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Heb. ix. 15.

It follows then that, as the death of the great mediator between heaven and earth was intended for the benefit of those who lived before, as well as of those who have lived since the occurrence of that astonishing event, and was designed as the propitiation for all the sins that ever have been, or ever will be, forgiven to sinful men, God in dispensing pardon has, in all ages, had respect to the all-sufficient price, by which it was purchased by his Son, for all who believe in him. This lamb of God, "without spot and blemish," by whose "precious blood sinners are redeemed, was foreordained," Peter tells us, "before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. In the book of revelation he is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Chap. xiii. 8.

Nor is it to be doubted, that the pious in former ages had a reference to this mode of salvation in the worship of Almighty God. In respect to light shed on this subject, there is indeed a great difference between them and us. They had the shadow, but we have the substance of divine things. But as from a well painted picture we can form some conception of the objects represented; so the pious of former ages were enabled, by the shadows and types by which heavenly things were exhibited to them, to form some, though, in comparison with ours, obscure conceptions of them. Their imperfect knowledge made them pant for clearer views. "Many prophets and righteous men," said Jesus to his disciples, "have desired to *see* those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to *hear* those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Mat. xiii. 17. "Of which salvation," says Peter, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand *the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow.*" Pet. i. 10, 11. "Your father Abraham," said Jesus to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day; and he *saw* it, and was glad." John viii. 56.

From these passages, as well as from many promises and predictions concerning the Messiah, that might be quoted, it is manifest, that pious men, before his advent, had some knowledge of Christ, and of the design of his coming. Indeed the first promise of the seed of the woman, who was to bruise the

serpent's head, graciously given to our first parents, shed some rays of light on this mysterious and glorious subject. And that they were taught to have respect to him in their worship, is plain enough to satisfy any humble and inquiring mind. The Jews had their high priest. On the great day of the atonement, (after having offered the appointed sacrifices,) he carried the blood into the most holy place, and there sprinkled it several times, and burnt incense; while the people were praying in the court of the temple. What was the meaning of all this? That it had a meaning, and that it was typical of the work of Jesus Christ, is certain; for an inspired writer has, in the 9th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, explained it as referring to him. It is true the Jews were unable to understand the meaning of this typical transaction, as perfectly as we do; but still they might have easily learnt from it this general truth, that they needed a mediator to intervene between God and them, to render their worship acceptable to infinite purity. The same truth they were taught, by the numerous sacrifices that were offered, from day to day, on the altar at Jerusalem. It was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Heb. x. 4. Multitudes, indeed, it is not to be doubted, did rely on their sacrifices as sufficient to make a *real* atonement for their sins. But this fact no more proves that the pious and enlightened among the Jews placed such a reliance on them, than the reliance which multitudes, under the clear light of the gospel, place on their good deeds, proves that pious and enlightened Christians expect to be justified by the merit of their own works. The continual repetition of the same sacrifices was designed to represent their insufficiency. Heb. x. 1—3. And still more plainly were the Jews taught this important truth, and to look to the grand sacrifice typified by them; as appears from the quotation made by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, on this subject, out of the 40th Psalm: "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Heb. x. 5—7.

To the sacrifice to be made by their Messiah, the pious under former economies looked, whenever they offered their sacrifices and their accompanying worship; and expected to be accepted of God, for the sake of that future provision which the Saviour was to make for their salvation, when he should come into the world. It was the faith of Abel, looking through the type to the antitype, that secured divine approbation to him; while the frowns of the Almighty lowered on the unbelief of his brother: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent

sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead, yet speaketh." Heb. xi. 4.

Why did the Jews in their prayers, from every part of the land, and every country in which they might reside, look toward the temple, but because the temple contained the *ark* and the *propitiatory* types of Christ. By this practice the pious were taught to have continual respect in their worship to that grand sacrifice that was in due time to be offered for sin.

We have detained our readers too long on the first query of DISCIPULUS; we proceed to reply to the second. It is thus expressed: "Whether that passage of holy writ, contained in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, from the 23d to the 35th verse inclusive, is opposed to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; seeing that the king, after having pardoned his servant, revoked that forgiveness, on account of his subsequent evil conduct. I am aware that the entire passage is a comment on the text, 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,' and may be said to have no reference to the other doctrine; but it is hoped that an explanation will be given which may be satisfactory and useful."

In explaining types and parables, a judicious commentator will consider their design, and not attempt to draw resemblances from every accompanying circumstance. A neglect of this rule would lead to a wild and visionary interpretation. There are points in which the resemblance between the type and the antitype will not hold. On the annual day of expiation among the Jews, two goats were used; the one sacrificed, and the other sent away into the wilderness, denominated the scape-goat. Levit. xvi. The first represented Christ suffering and dying for our sins; the second represented him rising from the dead for our justification, and thus bearing them completely away. But it would be absurd to conclude, from the circumstances of two goats being used, that we have two Saviours. In no other way could the two parts of the Redeemer's work have been better exhibited. All the types were imperfect in shadowing forth his excellence.

The serpent lifted up in the wilderness, for the relief of the Israelites stung by the fiery serpents, was a type of Christ. But in one circumstance, it is manifest, the resemblance does not hold. Those who looked to the serpent were completely healed of their disease; but sinners who look to the great antitype have the cure only begun; which is to be carried on to perfection, by a continually repeated application to the same sovereign remedy. Similar discrepancies might be pointed out in relation to other types.

The same rule is to be applied in explaining parables. Every

circumstance is not significant. Some are employed as the mere dress of the picture. In examining a painting, we look, not at the dress, but at the countenance, to discover the likeness of the original. The dress is often the result of mere fancy. So in examining a parable, to discover the truth exhibited by it, we must look at its great design, and not imagine that every particular in it has its corresponding truth. In the parable recorded in Luke xvi., an *unjust* steward, when his Lord demanded an account of his stewardship, and had resolved to deprive him of his office, is represented as providing for himself in a most iniquitous manner, by alienating his master's goods in favour of his debtors; and yet our blessed Saviour *commends* him as acting *wisely*. Now, in interpreting this parable, it would be absurd to extend the Redeemer's commendation beyond his manifest design; for he does not commend the *injustice* of this man in defrauding his master, and recommend an imitation of such iniquitous conduct; but only commends the *wisdom* with which this man acted, on his own *base* principles, to secure his own selfish end; and exhorts his disciples to act with as much wisdom, on *upright* principles, to promote their best and highest interests.

So, in another parable, recorded in Luke, xviiiith chapter, an *unjust* judge is represented as yielding to the importunate applications of a poor widow, and redressing her wrongs, not to satisfy the claims of justice, but merely to get rid of her importunity, and to avoid being wearied by her repeated entreaties. Yet on this parable is grounded this declaration of our Lord: "Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Now, it is manifest there are several points, in this parable, in which no resemblance can be found. God is not an unjust judge. God is never wearied by the believing applications of his people; nor does he ever grant their request to get rid of their importunity, or to avoid any trouble. The simple design of the parable is to exhibit the efficacy of importunity, and to show, that, as it can prevail with an unjust mortal, so it can prevail with a holy God.

These previous remarks have prepared the way for removing the difficulty of DISCIPULUS, in regard to the parable to which he refers. It can be done, it is believed, in few words. What was the design of this parable? It was intended to teach the necessity of our forgiving our offending fellow creatures in order to our obtaining forgiveness from God. The substance of the parable is this: a certain king, after forgiving an immense debt to one of his servants, who was unable to pay it, revoked the grant, in consequence of the cruelty of this servant to a fel-

low servant, who owed him but a small sum, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. The parable is closed with this solemn declaration by our Lord: "So likewise shall your heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Mat. xviii. 35. The question is, how far does the procedure of God in dispensing pardon accord with the proceedings of this king? This king forgave a debt *unconditionally*, in consequence of the utter incapacity of his servant to pay it, without any reference to an *equivalent*. But God, while he *freely* forgives the sinner, who is utterly unable to satisfy the claims of justice, yet forgives on account of the *satisfaction* of Jesus Christ. This king, after remitting it, exacted the debt, and threw his servant into prison. Here we apprehend he exceeded his right; for although this wicked servant deserved punishment on account of his cruelty to a fellow servant, yet the king, as he had, by remitting the debt, freed his servant from obligation to pay it, could have no right afterwards to demand payment. His subsequent claims on him for the debt, and delivering him to the tormentors, was an exercise of despotic power: and although our feelings may incline us to applaud his severity toward a hard-hearted wretch, who had shown himself unworthy of the favour that had been kindly bestowed; yet his conduct cannot be reconciled with the principles of justice. In this particular, then, we can find no parallel in the proceedings of the kingdom of heaven, which always accord with the principles of justice; and consequently the question whether God forgives sin *conditionally* or *absolutely*, must be determined, not by a reference to this parable, but by other testimonies of sacred scripture. All that we can learn from the parable, is, the great truth, that, if we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us. No argument, then, can be drawn from this parable against the doctrine of the perseverance of saints in grace.

In conclusion it may be proper to cite a few passages of scripture on the subject of divine forgiveness; from which it will appear that God never revokes the pardon which he has granted to believing suppliants. "Blessed," says David, "is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. "I have *blotted out*," is the gracious assurance of Jehovah to Israel, "as a cloud, thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah xlv. 22. "I even I, am he that *blotteth out* thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will *not remember* thy sins." Chap. xliii. 25. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. viii. 12. "Verily,

verily, I say unto you," is the solemn declaration of our Lord, "he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24. "There is, therefore, now, *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 1,) is the conclusion which Paul draws from the masterly reasoning by which he had established the great doctrine of free justification, through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith. And shortly afterwards, when he had reviewed the privileges and blessings of believers, under a full conviction of their perfect safety in Christ, he utters his bold and triumphant challenge: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dieth, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. viii. 33, 34. Such is the encouraging and animating language of holy scripture on this important subject. When God forgives a believer in Christ, he does it *freely, fully, and irrevocably.* J. J. J.

—

A PRELECTION ON MATT. II. 23.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

We shall not notice any of the conjectures that have been started on this passage. Our design is, simply to state what appears to be the mind of the Spirit in this verse, and support the interpretation, by what may be drawn from *the passage itself*. In order to perceive more clearly its exact import, we shall previously exhibit several principles, which seem easily deducible from the text, that the way may be prepared for its explanation.

1. The circumstance, or the general character or condition alluded to, is one which is spoken of by the prophets *generally*. No particular prophet is mentioned; but it is simply said, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *by the prophets*." And,

2. That the allusion is not to a particular *prophecy* or *prediction*, but to some circumstance, event, or condition, is evident from the very language "that it might be fulfilled." *ἵνα πληρωθῆ το ρηθὲν, &c.*

3. It is evident that this character, condition, or circumstance, spoken of, was the result of Christ's living at Nazareth. "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, *that* (*ἵνα*) it might be fulfilled."

4. The name denotes the character, and is only valuable as
VOL. II.—*Presb. Mag.* Z