

DIVINE INVERSION:  
OR  
A VIEW OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD  
AS IN ALL RESPECTS  
OPPOSED  
TO THE CHARACTER OF MAN.

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God is love. — 1 John 4:8.

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. — Rom. 8:7.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other. — Gal. 5:17.

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TO

THE MEMORY

OF

A BELOVED AND RESPECTED PARENT,

JOHN THOM,

MERCHANT IN GLASGOW.

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## PREFACE.

SOME time during the year 1829, my attention was drawn to the language of Hebrews 11:3: *through faith we understand that the worlds<sup>1</sup> were framed by the word of God*: a peculiarity of expression, which, it did not require the acuteness and philosophy of a Hume to discover, contradicts what naturally is matter of fact. Common observation satisfies us that it is through understanding we believe, not through believing we understand. In the above quoted passage, however, there was presented to me, on inspired authority, a view of faith or belief as the medium through which supernaturally the understanding of divine things is conveyed. The fact powerfully struck me. After some reflection, I saw the reason as well as accuracy of matters being stated in this inverted form. At a time when *life and immortality* had not yet been *brought to light*, except through faith as the result of immediate and miraculous revelation, [x] there existed no medium of understanding divine and spiritual things. But,

interesting to myself as my discovery was, I could then only regard the production of understanding by faith as a solitary phenomenon, having no connexion with, and no bearing upon, any general principle.

<sup>1</sup> αιωνας, ages.

About three years afterwards, in perusing the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, I was stopped at the tenth and eleventh verses, in consequence of there having been suggested to me a contrast between what is there asserted, and the account given in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the original creation of man. The apostle, after having declared, verse 10, *if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness*, goes on to say, in the following verse: *but if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* "Here," I observed to myself, "it is asserted as a positive fact, that in regeneration the mind is new-created in the first place, the new-creation of the body following at a subsequent period; while from Genesis 2:7, it appears that Adam's body was created first, and that the vital principle with the mind was imparted afterwards: the same order of the existence of body first, and of mind in the second [xi.] place, obtaining in the case of all his posterity. Is it possible," added I further, "that I can have stumbled upon a hitherto unobserved, or at least neglected truth? Is it possible that the order of generation and that of regeneration can thus, according to scripture, stand perfectly opposed the one to the other?" Upon more minutely enquiring into the circumstances of the case, I found that they actually did so. In generation, I perceived, we have body created in the first, and soul or mind in the second place; whereas in regeneration, we have spirit or mind new-created in the first, and body in the second place. All this I saw plainly as matter of divinely revealed fact. Still I had no suspicion of any general principle being involved in the discovery.

It was not until the end of the year 1835, or the beginning of 1836, that I was enabled to generalize to a certain degree the view presented in these pages. This happened in consequence of my having had another discovery of a particular application of the principle made to me.

The truth of the doctrine of universal salvation, scripturally considered, had been long apparent to me: indeed I had written and published at some length upon the subject.<sup>2</sup> But the following divine facts, although closely connected with the doctrine, did not, until the [xii.] period last alluded to, arrest my notice. Naturally, Adam existed before Abraham; or Adam the head of the whole human race naturally, appeared in point of time before Abraham the head of the church or elected portion of the human race naturally. Jesus, however, who combines in himself the two characters of Abraham and Adam, appears first as head of the church or elected body, before he appears ultimately as head of all; 1 Cor. 15:22-28; Heb. 2:6-9; that is, supernaturally Jesus appears as spiritual Abraham, before he appears as spiritual Adam. In this again I beheld inversion. Aye, and inversion of a most manifest and striking description too. Naturally, it shewed me the universal preceding the particular; supernaturally, the particular preceding the universal.

<sup>2</sup> *Assurance of Faith, or Calvinism identified with Universalism.* 1833, 2 vols. 8vo.

All at once, the fact of a general principle being concerned with these particular discoveries burst into my mind. I saw, as with the light of a sunbeam, a truth previously unknown to me inscribed on every page of the inspired volume. "Whatever," I exclaimed, "stands in any one order naturally, I now perceive always and necessarily stands in exactly the opposite order supernaturally." Nor was the conviction thus produced lessened by subsequent investigation. On the contrary, it went on gradually increasing. Doctrine after doctrine, fact after fact, in illustration of the principle thus made known, was thenceforward observed by me. And the system of divine [xiii.] inversion, not certainly in all the fulness with which I now understand it, but as evidently matter of divine revelation, took its established place in my mind.

Strange to say, for some time subsequently to my discovery of the principle of inverse order, I remained ignorant of the fact, that our blessed Lord himself had assumed its truth and reasoned from it. Towards the beginning of the year 1838, I observed him doing so in his address to the Pharisees, recorded Matt. 22:41-46. Not that the passage was altogether new to me. Frequently had I read it before, and some tolerable knowledge of its meaning I had conceived myself to possess; but as an assertion of the doctrine of divine inversion, it had never previously occurred to my mind. How strikingly, how cogently, how irresistibly, did I then behold the opposite order of things human and things divine, employed by the Son of God as a weapon for confuting, putting to shame, and silencing his adversaries! A view of the import of this most valuable and instructive portion of holy writ is given in my second section.

I may here remark, by the way, as an additional proof of the value of the doctrine in question, and as connected with the passage of which I have been speaking, that without understanding the necessary inversion or opposition of divine and human things, there is no possibility of apprehending the point and beauty, indeed, no possibility of [xiv.] apprehending the meaning of our Lord's confutation of the objection of the Sadducees, propounded in this same twenty-second chapter of Matthew. See verses 24-33.

Two or three years since, my mind underwent a still farther enlargement, in reference to the grand subject-matter of this Essay. Previously, I had merely looked at the *order* of the supernatural, as opposed to and contradicting the *order* of the natural. Then, however, I was given to see, that this inversion of order is merely one application of a principle which goes still deeper, and is still more general. That is, the complete opposition of man to God, and of God to man. True it is, that God's enmity or opposition to man is in reality love to him: the opposition of God to man in no one respect appearing more conspicuous than in this, that while man really hates God, Acts 2:23, Romans 8:7, God really loves man. Luke 2:14, 2 Cor. 5:19, 1 John 4:8-10. But, in appearance, God's opposition to man is hatred to man: Gen. 3:19; Ibid. 6:17; Deut. 7:2; Ibid. 28:15-68; Mal. 1:3: love, in so far as human nature, even the purest, is concerned, clothing itself with the aspect of enmity; Matt. 27:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; and never putting off that aspect until the realization of the complete conformity of the nature of the creature to the nature of the Creator. 1 Cor. 15:21-28, 49, 53, 54. God and man thus standing opposed the one to the other, there [xv.] exists also, as a matter of course, a mutual and complete opposition between the things of God and the things of man. And as a corollary from this, it is obvious that we never have, and never can have, a full, accurate, and scriptural view of any one divine doctrine, without being obliged at the same time to perceive it contradicting some doctrine current and reduced to practice among men.

Upon the general principle of a mutual and necessary opposition subsisting between divine and human things, and in illustration of it, is then the following work constructed. It pretends not to perfection. Far from it. The object is merely to throw out hints, upon which others, better because more profoundly taught from above, are likely to improve. Nor is it intended to put out of view, much less to supersede, other relative systems of divine truth. On the contrary, pretending, as the system advocated in these pages does, to no higher character than that of being itself relative, it is only by taking other *relative* systems along with it, and modifying its principles, doctrines, and statements, by a constant comparison of them with theirs, under the guidance and direction of the infallible Word of God, that any approximation to the only *absolute* system of divine truth can be made.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The *I am, all in all*, or eternal and unchangeable system of religion, is the only *absolutely true* one that exists. But there are at least three which bear upon them the stamp of being *relatively true*. These are: — the *progressive*, the *descending and ascending*, and the *inverse* systems. It will be observed by those who are acquainted with what is called theology, and who at the same time have been taught from above, that instead of speaking of different *orders of the divine decrees*, and assuming that the admission of one of them is necessarily exclusive and destructive of the others, I speak of different *relative* systems of divine truth, none

of which is or can be *absolutely* true, on account of their all bearing a relation to the mind of man, and presenting only particular aspects of the subject.

[xvi.] Although unable to claim for the system of inversion any higher rank than that of a merely *relative* one, it nevertheless involves and presents a view of divine truth which is supremely important: and this, in spite of its being a view which fleshly mind never yet took, and which under no circumstances fleshly mind will be enabled to take. Indeed, as a divine view, it must, upon the very principles of the work itself, stand opposed to all the views and imaginings of fleshly mind, of whatever nature and description these may be. Nor is this a mere theoretical assertion. The doctrine of divine inversion will be found actually to contradict popular religion, in every one of its almost endless varieties: exposing its hollowness, tracing it up to its human and Jewish origin, manifesting its opposition to the religion of the glorified Jesus, and overwhelming it with confusion. That a work written for the express purpose of bringing under notice such a view as this, should be a favourite with fleshly-minded religious characters, is impossible. Their liking to it, — if indeed, they *could* like it, — would afford to me the first [xvii.] and most substantial reason for questioning its truth. But I cherish *no fear* of any such result. Divine inversion interferes with too many of those principles and practices in which the creature glories, to permit of its being regarded with any other feelings than those of aversion and contempt. It saps the foundation of clerical influence and emolument, whether Popish or Protestant, whether Established or Dissenting. It assails and demolishes that stronghold of mere natural conscience, the idea of certain terms or conditions requiring to be fulfilled by man, before he can become an object of the divine favour. And it deposes from that high supremacy wherewith fleshly religionists have seen meet to invest them, those objects of their intense idolatry, creature faith, creature repentance, creature free-will, creature love, and creature perseverance, by ascribing salvation, — free, full, finished salvation, — to the one living and true God alone. Isaiah 45:22-25. Under such circumstances, can mere fleshly mind sit tamely and quietly by? Its religious instructors represented as mere "blind leaders of the blind;" its own *pious* efforts to obtain life everlasting stigmatized as exhibitions of the enmity of man's mind to God; and its gods, the cherished objects of its religious idolatry, insulted and trampled under foot; can flesh and blood be expected to tolerate such things? Certainly not. Favour, therefore, from the serious, the fleshly conscientious, and [xviii.] the fleshly pious, I cannot have. Active support from them is still more decidedly out of the question. Well off may I regard myself, if I escape altogether the effects of their vengeance. Their open and embittered opposition, however, is not the principal thing which I have to dread. The probable result of the publication of this work will be, what I have experienced on former occasions, the preservation on the part of the *soi-disant* pious, that is, of modern Pharisees, of total silence. Fleshly religion is too cunning, if it can help it, to compromise itself, by subjecting its views to the full glare of the light of divine truth. Ignorant and owl-like as are the minds of its professors, and, circumstanced as they are, necessarily mistaking darkness for light, there is nevertheless combined with their blindness too much of the nature of the serpent to permit them, in a matter of this kind, to expose themselves to unnecessary risques.

The whole scope of this volume, it is true, is anti-Socinian; and this, at a glance, it must by every one who is competently instructed in religious matters be perceived to be. But it is also anti-evangelical, understanding the word evangelical in the common, although much abused sense, which is assigned to it. *Saying what thou dost, master*, or fellow, as the case may be, *thou reproachest us also*, is, therefore, the only sort of acknowledgment which, from the so-called evangelical, I can anticipate. "Hadst [xix.] thou seen meet to unite with us in assisting to put down that monstrous, unscriptural, and God-defying theory Socinianism, and to confine thyself to this object, we might have graciously vouchsafed a smile to thee and thy labours. But having chosen to include us in the same sweeping sentence of condemnation with those whose notions we reprobate, what sort of treatment, ask thyself, hast thou a right to expect at our hands?" — Certainly no other but what I have already experienced,

and what of course I am prepared still to experience. See Matt. 21:45,46.

The following anecdote, presenting as it does a broad and decided contrast between a view of religion which is human and one which is divine, will serve at once to illustrate the grand principle brought forward and insisted on throughout this work, and appropriately to terminate my preface.

"James," said a minister of a very popular sect to a dying saint, on the day immediately preceding that which closed his earthly career — "James, have you yet made your peace with God?" "No; I have not," was the reply. "What!" exclaimed the surprised and reverend querist, "not made your peace with God, and death evidently so near at hand?" "I have not made my peace with God; nor do I purpose making any attempt to do so." "You perfectly astonish me. From a man like you, who has hitherto borne so excellent a character, [xx.] and acted so consistent a part in the world, one would have anticipated other and better things." "Well," said the dying man, "it is true that I have not made, and that I do not intend to make, my peace with God. If you want to know the reason why, it is because there is no occasion for my doing so. Blessed be God's name," — and these words he uttered with peculiar emphasis, — "he has himself made peace through the blood of the cross; and, instead of calling upon me to make my peace with him, he has thereby shewn me that he is at peace with me."

[1]

## DIVINE INVERSION.

### SECTION I.

#### HINTS.

THE sacred volume abounds with suggestions of the grand principle, which it is my business in this essay to state and develop. How surprising is it, that in comparatively few cases have these suggestions attracted notice; that in still fewer has the system which they involve, and to which they allude, been comprehended; and that by scarcely any one, if indeed by any, has that system been formally treated of, discussed, and explained, in a work expressly devoted to the purpose.

Brevity, in so far as may be consistent with perspicuity, being one of the objects aimed at by me in this volume, I pass over hundreds of passages of scripture which might be adduced as hinting the principle of divine inversion. Those which I have selected, though few in number, may, by making use of a Bible with copious marginal references, and examining the various texts which they indicate, be followed out to almost any extent. Not that marginal references are always to be depended on. Persons who have been much accustomed to consult them know, that [2] frequently, instead of throwing light on a difficult passage, they tend rather to perplex and lead astray. The exercise of a little judgment, however, and the valuable habit of discriminating between sound and sense, will serve commonly, in cases where there is even a very slender degree of spiritual illumination, to correct mistakes of this nature.

In the prophecies of Isaiah 55:8,9, occurs the following passage: — *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts, than your thoughts.* By these words we are expressly taught, that God's ways and thoughts are at once different from, and superior to, the ways and thoughts of mere human beings. Nay, am I not warranted in going further, and stating it to be the import of the language quoted, that the ways and thoughts of God stand in diametrical opposition to those of man?

*That which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God.* Luke 16:15. What can be more obvious, than that here is conveyed a significant hint of the principles upon which the

judgments of God are founded, being entirely opposed to those which are adopted and acted on by men?

And God's procedure itself, we find, in differing from and standing opposed to that of man, corresponds with the difference subsisting between the principles of his judgment and theirs. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* James 4:6. Also, Proverbs 3:34. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?* James 2:5. *He hath [3] scattered the proud, in the imagination of their hearts: he hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree: he hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* Luke 1:51-53. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Matthew 11:25,26. Connect this last passage with the whole strain of Psalm 8.

Again: — *The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* 1 Samuel 16:7. This passage speaks for itself.

What can be conceived more significant than the following language? *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.* Matthew 23:12. Unless it be the following: *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Luke 14:26.

Hints as to the thorough difference, or rather opposition, subsisting between human mind and divine mind, are furnished by such texts as, *the carnal mind, or mind of flesh, is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be.* Romans 8:7. *Know ye not, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* James 4:4.

Perhaps, the following passage suggests as striking a [4] hint with regard to the complete and diametrical opposition in which the principles and practices of men stand to those of God, as is to be found elsewhere throughout the whole compass of the holy scriptures. *Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.* (The very reason why such invitations are given.) *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee:* (one of the very reasons why such persons are not likely to be invited:) *for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.* Luke 14:12-14.<sup>4</sup> Not only does our Lord here exhort to the exhibition of a principle, and the adoption of a practice, exactly the opposite of those which obtain among human beings; but he here also suggests and shadows forth, in a manner not to be mistaken, his own procedure towards the children of men. He brings not to the gospel feast, — he peoples not heaven itself, — with those who are his equals; but seeking out the poor, maimed, lame, and blind offspring of Adam, from whom it is impossible that he can receive any recompense, upon them he showers down, ungrudgingly and for ever, his spiritual and divine favours.

<sup>4</sup> I never knew more than one individual who attempted to reduce to practice literally our Lord's exhortation; and he, poor fellow, passed among his acquaintances as near akin to an idiot. Dear J— D—, (I fear that I dare scarcely name him, for the sake of surviving relations,) I respect, I love, I delight to dwell on thy memory.

Let the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31; the judgment pronounced by Christ in the case of the woman taken in adultery, John 8:1-11; [5] the condemnation by our Lord of the notions entertained by Nicodemus, in common with his countrymen, as to the right of admission into the Messiah's kingdom, Ibid. 3:1-13; Peter's exhibition of strong fleshly attachment, and the keen and

cutting rebuke which it met with from his divine master, Matthew 16:21-23; and the parable of the rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully, Luke 12:15-21; indeed, let the whole strain, current, and phraseology of scripture, from first to last, as opening up views new and opposed to those of men, be considered; and, perhaps, there may be introduced into the minds of some, a suspicion of what never presented itself to them before, namely, that whatever, in regard to religious subjects, may be the judgments and actings of man, to these the judgments and actings of God always stand in an order exactly the inverse or opposite.

[6]

## SECTION II.

### THE DOCTRINE OF INVERSION STATED BY CHRIST HIMSELF.

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions.* Matthew 22:41-46.

In the passage quoted, our blessed Lord appears turning the tables upon his antagonists.

Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees had, in succession, attempted to entangle him in his talk, by putting to him insidious questions. The first, he had foiled by teaching the all-important distinction between things human and things divine; Matthew 22:21; the second, by shewing their total ignorance of the meaning of a portion of the Old Testament scriptures, which they themselves admitted to be from God; Ibid. 31,32; and the third, by giving to the querists such a brief and compendious, but perfect, summary of the Mosaic law, as necessarily commended itself even to their own consciences. Ibid. 37-40, with Mark 12:32,33. It was now our Lord's turn to address them. Hitherto, he had acted on the defensive; now, he [7] assumes an offensive attitude. His mode of attack and its effects are stated in the narrative which I have copied at the head of this section. A question proposed, admitting apparently of a most easy and obvious answer; and this, followed up by a second question, grounded upon the reply which those addressed could not help returning to the first; — the whole constituting a most beautiful example and application of the Socratic method of conveying instruction; — is sufficient to silence every adversary; and to shew the amazing difference between the depths of divine wisdom when attempted to be fathomed by the short line of creature intellect, and the shallowness of human wisdom when tested by the wisdom of the Creator.

Puzzled by our Lord's second question the Pharisees were. And yet, no sooner is the doctrine which I contend for understood, than the explanation of the puzzle is found to be at once simple and satisfactory.

The Jews, in replying that Christ was the *Son of David*, were perfectly right. He is, upon higher authority than theirs, declared to have been *made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*, Romans 1:3. And the Apostle Paul, by whom the words just quoted were written, after stating at Antioch in Pisidia that God *had found David, the son of Jesse, a man after his own heart, who should fulfil all his will*, exclaims, *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.* Acts 13:22,23. Consequently, so far as the answer of the Pharisees went, it expressed a most glorious truth, and no fault is to be found with it.

There was, however, a higher view of the character of the Messiah, or rather of the relationship in which he stood to David, equally true with the other; and of this the [8] persons spoken to by our Lord were ignorant. They knew what Christ was to be *in flesh*, but of what he was to be *in spirit* they knew

nothing. Upon the latter fact is founded our Lord's perplexing retort. Addressing the Pharisees, he as it were said: — "By the terms of your answer, the Messiah, as being David's son or descendant, is evidently his *inferior*. But David himself asserts, that the Messiah was to be his *superior!* *The Lord, Jehovah, said unto my Lord, Adoni, (that is, the Messiah,) sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool!* Psalm 110:1. And this, not following the suggestion of his own fleshly mind, or in a mere complimentary strain; but *in spirit*: that is, under the direct influence of *divine inspiration*, and with reference to that *spiritual* and superior system of things, which, in connexion with the Messiah, was to be introduced. — Now, how do you reconcile the apparent contradiction? As David's son, Messiah behoved to be David's *inferior*. As David's Lord, he necessarily should be David's *superior*. Both statements rest upon divine authority.<sup>5</sup> And, the inspired record being infallible, it is impossible that there can be any real discrepancy between them. Nevertheless, the one does appear to be at variance with the other. How then, pray, do you propose to reconcile the conflicting assertions? How can the individual spoken of be at once David's *inferior* and David's *superior*?"

<sup>5</sup> The one, on 1 Chron. 17:11-15. The other, on Psalm 110:1. As Pharisees, the persons addressed by Christ admitted the divine authority of both.

The Pharisees were unable to answer.

But we are not so circumstanced. As having had revealed to us the doctrine of divine inversion, the key to [9] the true solution is put into our hands. It is as follows; if, indeed, after what has been already hinted, it require to be reduced to form.

According to the flesh, or as man, the Messiah was David's *inferior*; and this, as having been his son. Or, the superiority of David to Christ, looking at the matter in this light, arose from David in order of time having appeared *first*, and the Messiah *second*.

According to the spirit, or as possessing an everlasting existence at God's right hand, — an existence which he had before his incarnation, no less than subsequent to it, John 17:5, — the Messiah was David's *superior* or Lord. Or, the superiority of Christ to David, looking at the matter in this light, sprang from the Messiah as Creator having existed *first*, and David as the Messiah's creature having existed only *in the second place*. — John 1:3.

In other words, the *natural* relation in which David stands to the Messiah is exactly and completely, nay even necessarily, the inverse or opposite of the *spiritual* relation which he bears to him. When looked at *naturally*, the Messiah follows David as his son and inferior; when looked at *spiritually*, the Messiah precedes David as his Lord and superior. Messiah *naturally* comes after David; David *spiritually* comes after the Messiah. The *natural* relation is thus the *inverse* of the *spiritual* relation. And the *spiritual* relation being *substantial*, while the *natural* relation is merely a *shadowy* representation of it; the *natural* relation is, therefore, in all respects subsidiary and subservient to *the other*.

Shall I be able to make the matter more intelligible if I state it thus?

[10] Naturally. — David, first; Messiah, second.

Spiritually. — Messiah, first; David, second.

Or thus: —

Naturally. — David, first; Messiah, last.

Spiritually. — David, last; Messiah, first.

*Before Abraham was, I am*, said Jesus, as recorded, John 8:58. So could he say equally, and so in the enigma upon which we are commenting does he say virtually, *before David was, I am*.

Thus is the difficulty completely removed; thus are the apparently conflicting statements completely reconciled. And as we advance we shall discover, that what appears here in the shape of an insulated fact, involves in it a general divine principle.

Striking and painful is it to think, that what was a puzzle to the Jews, remains equally a puzzle to our Jewishly-minded professors of Christianity, to the present day. And yet the solution proposed by me is no novelty. Multitudes have seen it before me. But by few has the application of the principle here laid down by our Lord to the rest of scripture been noticed; indeed, by few, I fear, have the query proposed and the answer implied been regarded in any higher light than that of a happy exercise of ingenuity. How different the view taken of the doctrine inculcated in this passage by those to whom God has been pleased, not only to open up its truth, but to shew its unspeakable importance!

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### SECTION III.

#### SOME SCRIPTURAL FACTS IN WHICH THE DOCTRINE OF INVERSION IS EMBODIED.

*Before Abraham was, I am.* John 8:58. Naturally, Abraham as having been his ancestor preceded the Messiah; spiritually, the Messiah as the *I am* or eternal Son of God preceded Abraham.

Adam's body was formed of the dust of the ground, and the bodies of his descendants are formed in the womb, in the first place; the breathing into his nostrils of the breath of life, and the imparting of a quickening principle to his posterity, being a subsequent operation. Gen. 2:7. But when our attention is directed towards the regenerating process, we find that it is exactly the reverse of the one which we have been speaking of: the mind in regeneration being first made spiritually alive, and spiritual existence being afterwards imparted to the body. *The spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you.* Rom. 8:10,11. That is, in generation, body is created first and mind second; whereas, in regeneration, mind is new-created first and body second.

These two examples having been already alluded to, I pass them over without any further remark. But they are of too great importance to be *entirely* omitted in an enumeration of facts illustrative of my position.

[12] I proceed to others.

In the order of nature, Cain was first and Abel second; in the order of grace or spirit, Abel as having been preferred to Cain stood first, and Cain was thrown into the back-ground. Gen. 4:4,5; Heb. 11:4.

Ishmael was Isaac's senior, and consequently superior, according to the flesh; Gen. 16:4,15; but Isaac took the precedence of Ishmael according to the spirit. Ibid. 17:18-21. For, whatever supremacy the children of the bondwoman may possess in a fleshly point of view, matters are always and necessarily reversed when spiritual and heavenly blessings are to be conferred. Then the son of the bondwoman is shown to be the inferior, by being cast out, and by not being suffered to inherit with the son of the freewoman. Gen. 21:10; Gal. 4:30.

Need I be particular in dwelling on the cases of Esau and Jacob; Gen. 25:22-26; of Joseph and his elder brethren; Ibid. 37:5-11; 42:6; and of David, who was the youngest of the sons of Jesse; 1 Sam. 16:6-13; in all of which the same general principle is enforced? The *elder* in every one of them is *made to serve the younger.* Rom. 9:12. Or God, reversing the natural order of things, in every instance confers *superiority* upon him who is by birth *inferior.*

With other facts, illustrative and corroborative of the same important truth, that God's thoughts stand

opposed to man's thoughts and God's acts to man's acts, the scriptures abound. The materials for evincing this are so copious, that the great difficulty which I experience is in making a selection.

We are informed in the book of Judges, that the Israelites having revolted against the Midianites, and [13] under the guidance of Gideon having prepared to engage in conflict with them, on the eve of the expected battle *the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children of the East, lay along in the valley, like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude.* Judges 7:12. A very large army was of course *naturally* required to cope with them. God, however, after having reduced Gideon's band of followers to three hundred men, was pleased himself to accomplish the discomfiture of the mighty host of their adversaries, without, properly speaking, any *adequate* intervention on the part of the Israelites at all. *Ibid. 19-22. Spiritually*, the many were defeated by the few. God, in this affair, reversed the *natural* connexion of causes and effects, means and ends, altogether.

Naturally and properly, murder and treason rank among the most atrocious of crimes. But God having enjoined upon Abraham the slaying of his own and only son, the patriarch, without the slightest hesitation, prepared to plunge the knife into the bosom of his child; *Gen. 22:10, compared with Rom. 4:20*; and Rahab the harlot, actually in opposition to all the duties prescribed by allegiance to her sovereign, received Joshua's spies, kindly entertained them, and sent them away in peace. *Josh. 2:1-22.* For *such* good works, observe, — that is, not for works which men consider good, or which men under ordinary circumstances either can or should approve of, but for works which, although diametrically opposed to those enjoined by human morality, were nevertheless commanded by God and performed in faith and obedience to his authority, — are Abraham and Rahab the objects of express divine com-[14]mendation. *James 2:21-25. Gen. 22:11,12,16-18. Joshua 6:22-25.* In this injunction and approbation on the part of God, of what stands revoltingly opposed to every correct notion of mere human morality, are we not furnished with a most striking example of divine inversion?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> My attention was first turned to the nature of the works denominated good by the apostle James, by an amiable and talented Christian friend, whose modesty I fear to wound by mentioning his name.

Among men, the great, the noble, and the talented are naturally and properly elevated to situations of honour, trust, and emolument. Jesus conferred the rank of apostleship, — a rank higher than any earthly dignity, — on fishermen, tax-gatherers, and others belonging to the inferior and illiterate classes of the community. *Matt. 9:9; 10:2-4: compare with 1 Cor. 1:25-29.*

Men must approve of the righteous and respectable members of society, and must assign to them the highest place in their esteem. Jesus came not, however, *to call the righteous, but sinners.*<sup>7</sup> *Matt. 9:13.* He declared to his self-righteous but respectable auditory, that *publicans and harlots should go into the kingdom of heaven before them.* *Matt. 21:31.* And publicans and sinners were permitted by him, to the great scandal of the Pharisees, to sit down at meat with him and his disciples. *Ibid. 9:10,11.*

<sup>7</sup> Εἰς μετανοίαν, *to repentance*, although found in the *textus receptus*, does not occur in the Vat. MS., 1209, one of the highest of all authorities.

The apostle Paul was, before his conversion, a *blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious.* *1 Tim. 1:13.* Nay, to such lengths did he carry his opposition to God as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, that, writing under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he declares himself to have been *the chief of sinners*, or the most atrocious trans-[15]gressor that ever existed. *Ibid. 15.* As a matter of course, such a character, upon natural principles, deserved to undergo a severer punishment than was ever inflicted on any other individual of the human race. God, however, acts not on natural principles. On the contrary, in the \*exercise of his infinite and adorable sovereignty, he chose to elevate this person, — this desperate hater of himself and his cause, — this murderer of his disciples, — to the rank of chief of the apostles and chief of saints! Could God have taken a more effectual way of shewing that his judgments and

procedure, so far from being regulated by, stand opposed to and necessarily contradict, the judgments and procedure of man?

Even Paul's criminality, previous to God's wonderful interposition in his behalf, contradicts all that men commonly suppose to be crime. So far from having been a disreputable character while he continued a Jew, he was the very reverse. Having been *taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, he was zealous towards God.* Acts 22:3. And, *after the straitest sect of his religion, he lived a Pharisee.* Ibid. 26:5. Nay, so pre-eminently excellent had been his character and conduct, as to enable him to say, when throwing a retrospective glance over his former life, that, *as touching the righteousness which is in the law*, he had been *blameless.* Philip. 3:6. Why, so far from having been a proper subject of censure, conduct such as this entitled Paul the Jew, according to the estimate of fleshly mind, to the rank and reputation of a saint. Indeed, no creature saint, with whose history I am acquainted, was ever capable of preferring such a claim to moral excellence as he did. But mark the decision of the word of God. [16] While exhibiting this apparent perfection of moral character, Paul was a sinner, aye and the chief of sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15. And in that very superior morality of his for which the world is ready to applaud him, consisted his sinfulness: it having been opposed by him to the perfect righteousness of the Son of God. Philip. 3:7-9. How strange, unaccountable, and incredible is all this to mere fleshly mind! "Is it possible," it is apt to inquire, "that human morality, and such a pure and perfect morality too, should under any circumstances have constituted an expression, an awful expression, of creature enmity to God?" To this, the short and simple answer is, that in the case of Paul it actually did so. Acts 9:5; 1 Tim. 1:13. And thus are we furnished with a very remarkable instance of the inverse order in which men's customary and natural notions stand to views which are divine.

Abraham's descendants according to the flesh concluded, that because God had favoured them previous to the advent of the Messiah, therefore they should continue to be objects of the divine favour during the Messiah's reign. God, in complete opposition to this inference of theirs, took away from them their former privileges, and bestowed privileges of a still higher description upon persons who formerly had been the objects of their hatred and contempt.

Our blessed Lord, while in flesh, was subject to man; Luke 2:51; Matt. 17:24-27: — as in Spirit, man is subject to him; Psalm 8:1,5-9; Heb. 2:7,8; Matt. 28:18. Ibid. 26:64. As in flesh, he was the man of sorrows; Isaiah 53:3; Matt. 26:38; — as risen from the dead, and clothed with his spiritual nature, he is in possession of that *fulness of joy*, and of those rivers of *pleasures*, which are at God's *right hand*, and which are [17] *for evermore.* Psalm 16:11. Acts 2:28. Heb. 12:2. Man expected the Messiah, while on earth, to be a conqueror; John 6:15; — God shewed him in the character of a sufferer; Matt. 16:21. Man condemned him; Matt. 26:66; 27:26; — God approved of him; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 10:40; 17:31. The Jews rejected him; Acts 13:50, &c.; — God rejected the Jews; Acts 28:26-28. In short, where Jesus of Nazareth is concerned, every thing is *inversion*: whatever may have been the views and procedure of men towards him, directly the opposite, in every respect, having been the views and procedure of God.

All miracles and prophecies are instances of divine inversion. The former, as contraventions of the laws of nature, not only exceed the power of man to perform, but also contradict his ordinary experience; and the latter, besides exhibiting a wisdom which is superior to that of man, contradict human anticipations and conclusions. In both, it is God directly opposing immediate interpositions of his own power and wisdom, to those phenomena of power and wisdom which man is capable of displaying.

Were I to go on enumerating the facts in which the inverse or opposite order of divine and human things make their appearance, I find that I must go on quoting, or at all events referring to, the whole of scripture.

Still, the specimens of the antagonism of divine and human views and conduct, contained in the

word of God, are so very striking and so very instructive, that I cannot resist the temptation of alluding to a few more of them.

Men would have considered the safety of the inhabitants of the antediluvian world cheaply purchased, at the expense of the lives of eight individuals; God considered the lives of eight individuals of more value than those of [18] all the rest of the then existing members of the human race. Genesis 7 and 8.

Men would have preferred preserving the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, to the rescuing of Lot and his family from destruction; God, as soon as he had brought Lot and his family into a place of refuge, delayed not a moment to execute the wrath which had so long impended over the cities of the plain. Genesis 19.

Murmuring appeared to the children of Israel to be perfectly proper, and justified by the circumstances in which they were placed, at Kibroth Hattaavah, Numbers 11:1-10, and by the Red Sea, Ibid. 21:4,5; their murmuring however was so improper and unjustifiable, and therefore so offensive, in the sight of God, that, on the one occasion, he punished it by sending the plague among them, Ibid. 11:33; and on the other, by means of fiery serpents. Ibid. 21:6.

Men would have condemned, nay men actually have condemned,<sup>8</sup> the indiscriminate slaughter of the people of Canaan; that slaughter, however, was carried into effect by the positive command of him who is the merciful, no less than the righteous and holy one. Deut. 7:2.

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Paine's *Age of Reason*, part first: also the writings of Chubb and other preceding Deists, from whom Paine borrowed the argument.

Jonah desired and would have been gratified with the destruction of Nineveh; God, even in apparent opposition to his own prophecy, was pleased for a time to spare it. Jonah 4:5,8,9; 3:4,10.

How beautifully, expressively, and instructively is the perfect opposition of God to all that is human in views, principles, and practice, brought out in the temptations of Christ and their results! Matt. 4:1-11.

One of the finest, and at the same time one of the most [19] unexpected and extraordinary, instances of inversion, is suggested to the mind by a comparison of the close of the volume of inspiration with its commencement. In the book of Genesis, the first book of scripture, towards the beginning, the *first man* is represented as having produced woman; Gen. 2:21-24; in the book of Revelation, the last of the inspired writings, woman is represented as having produced the second man. Rev. 12:1-5. That is, the *earthly man* is first father and then husband of woman, and thereby the source of all human beings naturally; whereas, inverting matters, woman<sup>9</sup> is mother, and then bride<sup>10</sup> or spouse of the *heavenly man*, and thereby ancestress of all intelligent beings supernaturally!<sup>11</sup> Facts like these are not the result of chance. Can the apostle Paul have alluded to this remarkable instance of inversion, when he says, *as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman?* 1 Cor. 11:12. At all events, it exactly verifies the language of the verse immediately preceding that just quoted: *as, the woman was not without the man, so neither is the man without the woman, in the Lord.*

<sup>9</sup> The church as woman. See Rev. 12:6.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. 19:7-9.

<sup>11</sup> Is not this the meaning of Gen. 3:20?

To sum up :

Let every instance in which God is represented in scripture as speaking and acting in the teeth of human maxims, human anticipations, and human reasonings, be searched out and considered, — and such instances positively fill the sacred volume, — and I think that a mass of facts will be collected,

sufficient to shew, that in asserting what is divine to be exactly and in all respects the opposite of what is human, upon the authority of God's word, I have at least not spoken unadvisedly.

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## SECTION IV.

### THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST, AND THE FIRST LAST.

This language will be best understood by considering the parabolical fact to which it has reference. Matthew 20:1-16.

Labourers are hired successively, for the same wages of a penny,<sup>12</sup> by the man who is an householder, at the first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh<sup>13</sup> hours; and are sent by him to work in his vineyard. When evening or the twelfth hour arrives, and payment of their services is made, not only are the same wages given to all, but the order of payment reverses exactly the order of being hired: Matt. 20:8: for those who were hired at the eleventh hour are paid first; those at the ninth hour, next; and so on, to those who were hired early in the morning, who receive their wages last. Ibid. 10. This, putting the other incidents of the parable out of view, is the grand fact to which our attention is invited in the words which I have placed at the head of the present section; *the last shall be first, and the first last.* Ibid. 16.

<sup>12</sup> A denarius; a Roman coin, said to have been worth about 7½d. of our money,

<sup>13</sup> Reckoning the day to consist of twelve working hours.

It matters not to my present argument what particular application of the apologue our Lord may have intended. Probably, indeed very probably, the calling of the Gentiles into the visible and fleshly church, after the resurrection [21] of Christ, and at the eleventh or last hour of that church's existence; and the giving to those Gentiles, at the evening or close of the Old Testament dispensation, the same New Testament privileges which were vouchsafed to Abraham's descendants, who had been subjected to the yoke and requirements of Moses's law, and had thereby *borne the burden and heat of the day*; constitute its scope and import. In which view I am confirmed, by adverting to the other axiom, by which the one already quoted is followed up; viz., *many are called but few chosen*: an axiom applicable to the gospel call as addressed by the apostles to the whole Jewish nation, and yet rendered effectual only to the elect portion of it.<sup>14</sup> But whatever may be in this, the principle laid down is a general one; and, as such, is expressed in the most general and unqualified terms: *so the last shall be first, and the first last.*

<sup>14</sup> It is but fair to mention, that, according to Granville Penn, Esq., the axiom *for many be called, &c.*, is, at this place, awanting in the Vatican MS., and some other ancient MSS. and versions. The proper place for it is, in his apprehension, Matthew 22:14, where it is to be found. — See Penn's Annotations to the Book of the New Covenant, page 159.

Every thing turns upon the word *so*, — οὐτως, *in like manner*,<sup>15</sup> in the Greek, — by which the axiom in question is prefaced. The introduction of this word shewing, that it was not as an insulated narrative, but in illustration of a [22] broad and universal principle, that our Lord had been speaking.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell's translation is *thus*; such also is the rendering of Mr. Penn, in his Book of the New Covenant. Dr. Macknight, I observe, assigns to οὐτως, (οὐτως before a vowel,) as one of its senses, the *illative* or *conclusive* one of *so then* or *therefore*. Preliminary Essays, Essay 4th. This, if he be correct, is the meaning which the word must bear in the passage now before us. And if so, it establishes my view as decidedly as does the sense which I have myself put upon it. Our Lord, in that case, is deducing a general conclusion from a specific narrative. I prefer, I confess, regarding the narrative as an illustration of a general principle; and hence my translation of *in like manner*.

"Be it remarked," as if Jesus had said, "that it is one of the grand and fundamental principles of the

divine administration, always, where spiritual matters are concerned, to reverse and act in opposition to the obvious and natural order of things; and the parable which I have been delivering is merely introductory to the statement of this. Men place first or give the first rank to that which appears to them to be of chief importance, and would feel that all their notions of propriety were outraged and violated, were an opposite order to be adopted by them. But with God it is different. He assigns the first place *naturally* to that which is inferior, subservient, and subsidiary. And when the end or purpose for which he had conceded that temporary superiority is accomplished, he completely reverses matters; raising to the first place *supernaturally*, or rather shewing as possessed of the first place *supernaturally*, that which in reality is first, namely, that which is the *end, purpose, or object*; and that in regard to which, what was previously and naturally first never possessed any higher rank or attribute than a mere *means*. Thus it is, that all which stands *first* in Judaism and nature, will be seen to be *last*, when the glorious antitypes of Judaism and nature shall be revealed; and these antitypes taking their appropriate places as *first*, whatever to the eye of nature and flesh appeared to go before them, will, by the spiritually enlightened eye, be seen as *last* to have proceeded from them. The antitypes appear to the eye of sense to be the effects and consequences of the types; while the types are seen by God, and by those who possess his mind, to have been the effects and con-[23]sequences of the antitypes.<sup>16</sup> The *last* are in reality *first*; the *first* are in reality *last*."

<sup>16</sup> Coloss. 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 9:23,24.

Perhaps the general principle involved in the narrative may be thus expressed. Naturally, this present world, and Judaism as a system belonging to it, come first in order; and Christianity, with its new heavens and new earth, appear to succeed. Supernaturally, however, our Lord's reign, and what to us are new heavens and a new earth, existed before time began; John 17:5; and this present world and Judaism are merely shadows temporarily emanating from them, which into them as their substances are again eternally to be resolved. Heb. 11:3; 12:27,28; 2 Peter 3:10-13. In a word, what is *last* with God is *first* with us; and, *vice versa*, what is *first* in our apprehension is *last* with God.

Thus is a parable, in itself most instructive, rendered subservient to the assertion of a general principle which runs throughout the whole of revelation, viz., the inverse order in which things human stand to things divine, and things divine to things human.

[24]

## SECTION V.

### OBJECTION TAKEN FROM THE TYPICAL CHARACTER OF NATURAL THINGS MET AND ANSWERED.

To all that goes before it may be objected, that the doctrine of the inverse or opposed arrangement of divine and human things is inconsistent with the scriptural and admitted fact of things natural being the types or representatives of things divine. "For how," it may be argued, and argued with much apparent plausibility, "can that which is typical of or resembles another thing or person, be so different from that other thing or person, as actually to present to it or him a front of sturdy and irreconcileable opposition? To maintain the doctrine of things natural being the types or figures of things divine, must," according to the objection which we are now considering, "be to abandon the doctrine of things natural being contrasted with, and standing opposed to, things divine; and *vice versa*."

My reply to this objection is, —

In the first place, that no one can contend more strenuously for things natural being employed in the scriptures as the types or figures of things supernatural than I do. Indeed, it has long been my decided conviction, founded on a minute and searching examination of the subject, that, from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament, the whole is a series of figurative intimations of the future Messiah,

couched in one form or another: *the testimony* [25] of Jesus being *the spirit of prophecy*. Rev. 19:10. True it is, the antitype is not always applied to the type, in the same order in which the type itself is presented. Viewing the type as set down naturally in what we may be disposed to consider a straightforward order, the antitype, instead of following the same arrangement, is as it were folded back upon it, or applied to it in the inverse order. If natural body appear first, and natural mind second, the manner of the application of the antitype to these is the reverse; spiritual mind appearing first, and spiritual body second. Still, however, there is here an exact adaptation of antitype to type; of mind to mind, and of body to body. And so in every other case. Whatever may be the type, although the order may be inverted, it always finds its counterpart in the antitype. Adam occupying the second place supernaturally, although first naturally, is realized or finds his antitype in Christ the spiritual Adam. The sacrifices of the law, although deprived of the first place which they hold naturally, in consequence of being seen in a spiritual point of view to have been merely the "shadows of coming events flung before," are nevertheless realized in the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus. Type must be realized in antitype; otherwise, the figurative character of the former is done away with. And the fact of the order or arrangement of the one being the inverse of that of the other, in no respect whatever interferes with their mutual adaptation. But,

Secondly, every type, figure, or resemblance in scripture, implies contrast; and contrast, too, in those very respects in which the typical character of the creature is presented. If there be resemblance borne by the type to the antitype, there is always obtruded on our notice difference, contrast, [26] or opposition, as connected with, nay as absolutely implied in, the very resemblance. For instance: — Adam was the type of Christ, or resembled him in having been at the head of creation: Gen. 1:26: but Adam's headship was temporary, Christ's is eternal; Adam as head had only to do with natural creation, Christ is at the head of creation, natural and supernatural; Adam was himself a portion of that very creation whose figurative head he was, Christ was the creator of all things. Again: the sacrifices of the law, as deprivations of life, as offered by a priest, and as expiatory of guilt, were types of the sacrifice of Christ: but they implied the destruction merely of animal life, while the death of Jesus was the destruction of the life of the Son of God; the priests of the law were dying creatures, but the priest who offered the one sacrifice by which sin is taken away is he of *whom it is testified that he liveth*; the atoning efficacy of the Mosaic sacrifices reached only to *the purifying of the flesh*, the efficacy of that of Jesus is such as to purge the conscience, and put away sin itself for ever. Time would fail me were I to enlarge, as I might do, on this subject. Suffice it to observe, that every type or resemblance in scripture stands connected with some difference; or that the types of the sacred volume are as remarkable for the contrasts which they suggest, as for the likenesses which they exhibit. Abraham having *hoped against hope*, ranks at the head of believers among mere human beings, and as such gloriously prefigured Christ; but Abraham lied under the influence of unbelief, and thereby stands contrasted with his divine Son and antitype. Moses was meek, and in this respect typified Christ; but at the waters of Meribah he exhibited a temper and spirit the very opposite of that of meekness, thereby [27] failing or coming short in the very quality in which his character was emblematic. Solomon was wise; but Solomon's latter days closed in a series of acts of the most egregious folly. As wise, he prefigured Christ; as foolish, he stands contrasted with him. And so with regard to every type which scripture brings under our notice. They all indicate resemblance as borne in some particular respects by the creature to the Creator; but they all likewise indicate contrast or opposition as inseparably connected with this resemblance, nay as making their appearance in those very respects in which the resemblance consists. And thus,

Thirdly, we are led on to observe, that so far from the types or resemblances of scripture being what God chiefly and ultimately purposes to impress on our attention, the great use of the resemblance subsisting *accidentally* between things human and things divine, is to suggest to us the contrast or opposition which exists *essentially* between them. Types are means of ultimately bringing out and

manifesting the opposition in which they stand to their antitypes, and their antitypes to them. The objection to which I am replying proceeds upon the principle of its being impossible that things natural should resemble, and yet should stand contrasted with, things supernatural. Undoubtedly, if the resemblances and the contrasts be alleged to exist in the same respects, such an assertion, as self-inconsistent and self-contradictory, at once falls to the ground. But surely things resembling in one respect, may differ in another. And things agreeing in certain trifling properties, may disagree in all those which are of real importance. Now this is exactly what scripture acquaints us with, as being matter of fact in regard to the relations subsisting between God and man. The resemblances are [28] inferior and accidental; the differences are supreme and essential. And the principal use of the former is to be subservient to the manifestation of the latter. An acquaintance with the mediatorial character of Christ removes every difficulty, by affording a satisfactory explanation of the whole subject. He unites in himself the natures of man and God. To him, as man, the types or resemblances point; while in him, as God, the essential differences subsisting between the Creator and the creature make their appearance. But his temporary manifestation as man, was subservient to his everlasting manifestation as God. Just so, in him the types or resemblances as connected with his incarnation become reconciled with, as well as are seen to have been subservient to, the differences or contrasts as connected with his state of glorification. As man, or rather as God manifest in the flesh, all creature types or resemblances appear realized in him; and yet, in their very realization, they are seen pointing to essential differences subsisting between him the Creator and mere creatures. In prosecution of which, when after rising from the dead he took his seat at God's right hand, all the resemblances previously existing between him and mere creatures disappeared, having been swallowed up in the differences or contrasts to the manifestation of which they had been all along subservient. A similar use of the types or resemblances we discover in our own experience. They give us an introduction to the knowledge of God, serving as so many hooks, by which God takes hold of our minds and fastens truth upon them; apart from these analogies or resemblances, indeed, acquaintance with the divine character being absolutely unattainable. But in presenting resemblances, the types suggest differences. [29] And these differences, when we are enlightened from above and made partakers of the heavenly mind of Christ, are discovered by us to be the ends to the bringing out of which the resemblances have been merely subservient. The resemblances having thus served their purpose pass away, being absorbed or swallowed up in our minds in the contrasts, to an acquaintance with which they have been the means of introducing us. In other words, the means are superseded by the end. And thus, as Christ, who while in flesh resembled us, now in spirit stands contrasted with and opposed to us; — the temporary resemblances subsisting between him and us, having been in him subservient to the manifestation of the everlasting contrasts between his heavenly nature and our earthly one; — just so, when we ourselves become partakers of the earnest of his spirit or heavenly mind, we discover, that in ourselves those points in which the creature accidentally resembled the Creator, having been merely subservient to the making us acquainted with the essential and necessary opposition in which the Creator stands to the creature, have issued in the creation in us spiritually of a principle which stands diametrically opposed to all the principles which we naturally possess. Rom. 7:22,23; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:17.

The substance, then, of my answer to the objection started to the doctrine of an essential difference or rather opposition subsisting between the creature and the Creator, which rests on the acknowledged fact of creature things being typical or figurative of divine things, is this: that every type in scripture, while it implies a resemblance, also suggests a difference between itself and its antitype; and that the resemblances between things human and things divine being merely accidental, while the differences or [30] contrasts are essential; and the resemblances as temporary being merely subservient to the bringing out and manifestation of the differences as eternal; — a state of things necessarily resulting in the ultimate and complete absorption of the resemblances in the differences; — it clearly follows, that to maintain the typical character of all the natural persons and occurrences of the Old Testament

scriptures, so far from being inconsistent with maintaining the existence of an essential and mutual opposition between things human and things divine, the grand doctrine of this treatise, is merely to maintain one of the very media, the principal medium indeed, through which that opposition is brought out and rendered manifest.

As a corollary from this subject, every attempt to run up human analogies into things which are properly speaking divine is necessarily a failure, because it proceeds upon a principle which is fundamentally erroneous. It supposes things human to bear an actual resemblance to things which are divine. Whereas, between the one and the other the relation is that, not of analogy, but of contrast. The Sadducees, presuming upon analogy in the case of the woman who had had seven husbands, were convicted of ignorance by our blessed Lord, on the ground of things divine, so far from really resembling, standing contrasted with and opposed to things human. Matthew 22:23-32. And just so, every species of reasoning, which from the fact of sin existing here would attempt to conclude as to the probability or necessity of its existence hereafter, is upon the same principle vicious and therefore condemned. From things divine to things human, if the syllogism or enthymeme be rightly constructed, the most accurate and convincing inferences may be drawn; from things human to things divine, it is impossible to construct [31] a syllogism which is worth even listening to. The very attempt to reason on such a principle is sophistical. And where lengthened arguments from human to divine things, or from presumed analogies subsisting between the former and the latter, have been had recourse to, it is sometimes rather difficult to persuade oneself of the thorough honesty of the individuals from whom such preposterous specimens of ratiocination have emanated.

Viewed in the light thus thrown upon the subject, how inconclusive, how positively worthless, is such a work as Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed," seen to be, when venturing to assume, or attempting to infer, that the nature and properties of a future state of existence must be similar to those of the present! Confined to the single purpose of turning the tables upon the Deist, by shewing, that the very difficulties which he objects to in revelation, are difficulties equally discoverable in, and equally pressing against, the works of God in nature and providence, few treatises are more cogent, more powerful, more triumphant. The amazing acuteness, the clear and overwhelming illustrations, the close and vigorous logic with which the work in question abounds, are then worthy of all admiration. But when the Bishop steps out of his own legitimate province, and instead of reasoning from facts in confutation of Deism, pretends on the ground of human analogies to establish a resemblance between the future state and the present, I know scarcely any production of the same range and grasp of intellect which is more trifling and puerile, and the arguments of which are more calculated to beget, as well as to strengthen, that very scepticism against which it professes to be levelled.

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## SECTION VI.

### THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE INVERSION.

Let us, in order to apprehend this subject rightly, begin by taking a look at certain parts of the ground over which we travelled in the last section.

Analogy or resemblance of the creature to the Creator makes its appearance, not only in the volume of inspiration, but, taught by its hints, in the wide field of nature and providence likewise. In this analogy is laid the foundation of all those ideas of God and divine things, which, as possessed of mere fleshly minds, mankind are capable of receiving. For, apart from the existence of a manifested likeness between things human and things divine, the religious principle naturally implanted in man's mental constitution could have had no opportunity of exercising and displaying itself. But analogy has a still

higher use. It furnishes to God the means of imparting spiritual and real, as distinguished from mere fleshly, views of religion. Without a likeness subsisting between things human and divine, there could have been no means of suggesting the existence of differences between them; and without the discovery of a difference between the Creator and the creature, as the one must have remained for ever confounded with the other, there could in reality have been no divine revelation. In analogy or resemblance, then, God finds the tie or link upon which he fastens the idea of difference or contrast. Analogy is thus not only the medium through which human mind, vainly attempting [33] to operate upwardly, acquires and remains possessed of mere creature views of the Creator; but it is also the medium through which divine mind, operating downwardly, by the manifestation of difference, confers views of the Creator which are heavenly and spiritual.

The types or analogies of revelation are, it thus appears, most important. A complete and systematic view of them, resting upon the authority and suggestions of scripture alone, springing from a divinely-enlightened understanding, and drawn up in consequence of an accurate and comprehensive as well as minute acquaintance with literature, science, and art, would be a most desirable performance. But it is a work which yet remains to be written. Swedenborg tried it, in his *Arcana Celestia*, and his *De Cœlo et de Inferno*, and signally failed. Not that the principles upon which he proceeded are altogether erroneous. Not that all his views and suggestions are unhesitatingly to be rejected. But that fancy, — human ingenuity, I should rather say, — has with him, in the great majority of instances, usurped the place and superseded the declarations of the word of God. And, above all, that the subserviency of resemblances to the manifestation of differences, and of these to the manifestation of essential and necessary opposition, — even if we should grant this last to have been known to him, which it does not appear to have been, — is a principle the very reverse of that of final analogy, upon which he proceeded. Every thing in the "New Jerusalem theory" is, indeed, analogy or resemblance. Things divine always, in it, bear a likeness to things human. Future inquirers, who have been divinely taught, will be far from despising what Swedenborg has published. But, guided by higher principles, [34] while they select from his writings what is true and confess their obligations to him, they will reverse his process of running up human analogies into divine verities, by shewing, that divine verities, while they make use of, actually and ultimately destroy, such analogies; and thus subordinating the analogies to the manifestation of differences, they will present a more satisfactory because a more correct and scriptural result.

Analogy between things human and things divine possess no higher rank, then, than that of mere means. They are subservient to the manifestation of differences, but nothing more. When God, through their instrumentality, has succeeded in fastening upon the conscience a view of himself and divine things, as in all respects and thoroughly contrasted with man and human things, the purpose of the analogies having been answered they pass away. And just so, proportionally, in every additional view of God as different from man, that is, in every higher and corrector view of the divine character, some preceding analogical and therefore merely subsidiary and fleshly idea of God is, by the very necessity of the case, superseded and set aside.

To the discovery of difference or contrast between the Creator and the creature, every mind brought into contact with the volume of inspiration is thus necessarily conducted; and the analogies between God and man which scripture viewed in its literal form presents, and with the consideration of which fleshly mind is principally concerned, are thus found to be merely so many means of suggesting and bringing out this contrast.

Contrast appears in natural creation as a whole, when compared with spiritual creation as a whole. It appears [35] still more, when the details of the one are compared with the details of the other: for instance, when the natural heavens are compared with the spiritual heavens; and the natural earth with the spiritual earth. Above all, does this contrast or difference come out, when we compare the first man

of the earth, earthy, in himself and his descendants, with the second man, the Lord from heaven, in similar respects. To mark the difference between things human and things divine is, indeed, the scope of revelation: with this object it begins; with this object it is carried on; with this object it terminates. The difference in question began to be manifested in Eden, when, immediately after the introduction of sin by man, the destruction of sin by God in human form was figuratively announced. Gen. 3:15. It was brought out in every subsequent period of man's history: such, for instance, as when Pharaoh, in the ignorance of his heart, having supposed that, in resisting the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt he was acting independently of God, was accomplishing his own will only, and was capable of frustrating the divine purpose, — God gave him to understand, that in reality so complete was his dependence, that in every part of his violent and tyrannical procedure he was unintentionally fulfilling designs totally different from his own. Exod. 9:16. Rom. 9:17. It made its appearance still more decidedly, when Jesus, having been crucified by man, was raised by God from the dead: the will of man, in its vain attempts to frustrate the will of God, having been subservient to the display of a most striking contrast between the creature and the Creator. Matthew 27, *throughout*. Acts 2:23,24. And it will come out in the fulness of its manifestation at the close of this present [36] world; when human mind, being completely developed, in all its bearings, capacities, and attainments, will afford the means for a complete development of divine mind as in every respect contrasted with it. Natural creation as a means of contrast with spiritual creation, having then fulfilled all God's purposes, will, as a matter of course, come to an end.

But even the manifestation of difference or contrast between himself and his creatures, is not the ultimate end at which God in revelation aims. The making known of *difference* is in his hands subservient to the still higher disclosure of absolute and uncompromising *opposition*. Man's nature not only differs from, but in all respects stands opposed to God's nature; and God's nature not only differs from, but in all respects stands opposed to man's nature. I have already observed, that to have bestowed upon us a discovery of the difference subsisting between things human and things divine is one of the results of divine teaching. And so unquestionably it is. For when God's mind begins to operate downwardly upon the mind of the creature, a view of the difference between God and man is one of the first things which it suggests. Nevertheless, the idea of such a difference existing is not restricted to spiritual mind; for the mere fleshly mind of man, operating upwardly, may acquire some although inferior conceptions of it. Analogy itself suggests it; and there never probably existed a single carnal professor of religion to whom the view was altogether unknown. Here, however, fleshly mind stops. It possesses a natural notion of a difference subsisting between God and man; but nothing more. Of the spiritual idea of the one being opposed to the other, it is completely destitute. It labours [37] under the impression, that however much the nature of the creature may differ from that of the Creator, there nevertheless exists some method of so reconciling them, as to render creature nature agreeable to God, and thereby to ensure its preservation and existence for ever. When the earnest of divine mind, however, is superinduced upon human mind, and the previous and lower view of mere difference between God and man is rendered subservient to and swallowed up in the higher view of opposition subsisting between them, a complete revolution takes place. The creature and the Creator are then seen standing to each other in the attitude of enemies. The mind of man being discovered to be enmity to God, Romans 8:7, God is seen clothed with all the terrific attributes of enmity to man. Psalm 7:11; 50:22. This mutual opposition is seen to be rooted, gradually-increasing, and irreconcileable. Man's opposition to God drawing forth exhibitions of God's opposition to man, the breach becomes widened more and more. At last matters attain to a crisis. And only one such can be conceived of. Creature opposition must give way to, must be overwhelmed and destroyed by, divine opposition. In the nature of the Creator, the nature of the rebellious creature must be swallowed up. And so it is. Corruption is swallowed up in incorruption; *mortality is swallowed up of life*. 1 Cor. 15:54; 2 Cor. 5:4. There is no doubt in this way a oneness or reconciliation between the creature and the Creator effected. But the

oneness in question, so far from implying a preservation of creature nature, is produced by an absorption of the nature of the creature in the nature of the Creator.

Ignorance of this essential and irreconcileable opposition [38] between things divine and things human, lies at the bottom of innumerable false principles, doctrines, and conclusions, both in philosophy and religion. It has given birth to the notion of the soul's immortality; of the resurrection of a flesh and blood body; and of the influence of mere human virtue upon a higher state of existence. It has led men to argue, that on the same grounds on which we proceed in *nature* God must proceed in *grace*; and that, understanding men's motives and actions, we are qualified to understand, test, and fathom the motives and actions of God himself. What a death-blow is made to light on all such follies, by the manifestation of the thorough and essential opposition subsisting between the creature and the Creator! The mortality of soul is then seen opposed to and swallowed up in the immortality of spirit; Gen. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:22,45; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 1:10; flesh and blood body is opposed to and in due time swallowed up in glorious body, fashioned like to the glorious body of the Son of God; Philip. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:49,54; and human virtue, hollow, worthless and vain, and unable to protect its possessors even from the stroke of death, much less to bestow upon them a higher life, is seen opposed to and superseded by the divine righteousness of the Son of God. Rom. 5:12-21; 6:23; 10:3,4; Titus 3:5. As to God's principles in *grace*, so far from agreeing with, they positively contradict those upon which man proceeds, and properly proceeds, in *nature*; Matt. 8:21,22; 9:10-13; 21:31; James 2:21-25; and, instead of the shallow line of man's intellect and morals enabling him to measure God, God we find opposing, setting at nought, sweeping away, and positively swallowing up both, in the glorious outburst, through his own Son, of his divine and heavenly perfec-[39]tions. Job 11:6-11; Psalm 2:4; Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 1:19-21. The knowledge of the thorough opposition subsisting between God and man, is what alone enables us to attain to self-consistent and satisfactory views of things spiritual and divine.

For the knowledge of the opposition in question, we are indebted to the entrance and temporary reign of sin. Apart from this, God might have appeared *different* from man; but apart from this, his character could never have been revealed as *opposed* to that of man. Sin, in the case of Adam, was the first display of that enmity to the Creator, which is inherent in the mind and nature of the creature. Rom. 8:7. This display of enmity on the part of the creature to the Creator, gave occasion to a corresponding display of enmity to the creature on the part of the Creator. Gen. 3:19. As time rolled on, the creature augmenting in its exhibitions of walking contrary to God, God appeared more and more walking contrary to it.<sup>17</sup> At last, the creature formed into a fleshly church not only crucified the Lord of glory upon earth, but also rejected him speaking from heaven. Heb. 12:25. Such an awful display of opposition by the creature to the Creator, drew forth from the Creator a corresponding display of opposition, in the outpouring of vengeance upon the fleshly church to the very uttermost. 1 Thess. 2:14-16. And the enmity to God on man's part will continue begetting enmity to man on God's part, until the display of mutual enmity or of the thorough opposition between the two natures being complete, the controversy will be ended by the absorption of creature nature in the divine nature. The enmity to God thus existing in man will only terminate with the existence of man's nature itself.

<sup>17</sup> Levit. 26:23,24,27,28.

[40] I was very desirous at this point to have gone a little deeper into the subject; and, developing the principle of the existence in creature nature of the combination of apparent resemblance with essential opposition to the nature of the Creator, to have shewn, that in this exceedingly simple fact lay concealed the germ and real origin of the entrance and dominion of evil. Indeed, to have shewn, that this *quæstio vexatissima*, in the understanding of the fact just stated, finds an easy, appropriate and satisfactory solution. But I cannot afford to enter upon such a topic in this necessarily brief treatise: a treatise devoted more properly to the illustration of a scriptural fact, than to a research into and development of its recondite principles. In the mean time, however, with a view to give professors of

theology and biblical critics "a nut to crack;" to test the depth of their divine knowledge; and to bring out their qualifications to instruct others in religious matters; I would beg leave to toss to them the following paradox: — For a mere creature to be like God is, supposing divine law to intervene, for that creature *necessarily* to hate God; and the liker mere creatures are to God, the more, making the same supposition, do they *necessarily* hate God.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Being but a poor man, I have not "an hundred guineas," (see the case *Harris versus Mammon*,) or any other sum, to offer to him who shall solve my puzzle. And possessing no influence whatever, either in literary or theological circles, my challenge is likely to meet with universal neglect. Nevertheless, if some individual, who has not got the hint either directly or indirectly from myself, shall attempt and shall be successful in giving the solution, addressing him, anticipatively, in the words of the Roman poet,

*Eris mihi magnus Apollo,*

I can assure him, that he will find me very much disposed to sit down as a meek and humble disciple at his feet. It will be requisite, however for a man to have *ploughed with* the gospel *heifer*, before he can expect to *find out my riddle*. *Judges 14:18.*

[41] Thus, then, did the creation of man prepare for the revelation of analogies subsisting between God and man; these analogies, for the revelation of differences; and these differences, for the revelation of entire and destructive opposition. And this mutual opposition of God and man, — this inverse order in which divine and human things stand to each other, — is the ultimate object which God has to make known.

Having advanced thus far, my readers by looking back upon the preceding section will perceive, that I there assumed *difference* between God and man, and *opposition* of God to man, to be one and the same thing. This I did, with a view to avoid complicating too much the reply which I was making to an objection, which my leading doctrine was but too likely to encounter: an objection founded on the apparent impossibility of reconciling the typical or figurative character of man, with the alleged fact of his standing in all respects opposed to God. Under these circumstances, however, a more detailed as well as a more accurate and scriptural specification of my meaning became requisite. Hence the additional view submitted by me in the present section. The manifestation of *difference* between God and man, although requisite as a stepping-stone to the manifestation of the *opposition* subsisting between them, is not directly the manifestation of *that opposition itself*. The Old Testament Scriptures, properly speaking, treat only of *difference* between God and man: it was reserved for the writings of the New, to make the higher view of *opposition* between them apparent. And the reason is obvious.

*Difference* between the Creator and the creature *may*, nay *must*, when the subject is properly presented, be apprehended by every adult *human* [42] *mind*. But to apprehend the thorough and irreconcileable *opposition* of the Creator and the creature, is the result of the formation in us of the earnest of *divine mind*. Hence, in dealing with the fleshly church of the Jews in the Old Testament Scriptures, God in a great measure contented himself with proposing his character as *different* from that of man; while, in forming to himself a spiritual church, consisting of members of the true Israel, he does so by opening up his nature in the New Testament Scriptures as opposed to, and destructive of, the nature of man. Jesus in dying and rising again, and in thereby swallowing up the nature of the earthy, with sin and death and all its other concomitants, in the nature of the heavenly, is the medium through which God carries into effect this higher manifestation of his character. 2 Tim. 1:10. All previous manifestations of the divine character are thus, in the Lord's Christ, seen to have been merely subservient and subsidiary to this its highest and most glorious manifestation, as the thorough and destructive opponent of creature nature.

Still, even this is not to treat the subject with sufficiently philosophical, rather theological precision. I have hitherto represented analogies as preceding differences; and so, in certain points of view, practically they do. Especially, resemblances go before differences, as furnishing the hooks upon which

differences are to be fastened. But now, to speak more accurately, the previous discovery of resemblances is not the cause of men subsequently discovering differences; for it is difference previously made known that enables men afterwards to discover resemblances. The revelation of analogies between God and man in Scripture, rests upon the previous revelation of differences as its [43] basis; not that of differences, upon that of analogies. Perhaps, more simply, without the revelation of differences there could never have been the revelation of resemblances.<sup>19</sup> But the human mind is perfectly capable by its own native faculties of detecting differences. If so, *à fortiori* it must be capable also of observing and appreciating resemblances. The conclusion from the whole, then, is, that to understand the *differences*, and thereby the *analogies*, subsisting between God and man, when these are once made known by God himself in human language, no new creation of the mind is required; man's ordinary and natural powers being, of themselves, perfectly competent to the apprehension of them.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, evil entered, or a *difference* between good and evil was made known, before any *analogy* or resemblance between the creature and the Creator could be revealed. In every age, indeed, the *negative* or *loss* must be experienced, before the *positive* can be appreciated. Some years since, I saw this doctrine most happily illustrated in the Edinburgh Review. Was the article from the pen of Thomas Carlyle?

How, then, stands the matter exactly? Why, thus:

First. Without a divine revelation in human language, there could have been no conception of God at all, whether natural or supernatural. This I assume, as having been sufficiently proved by me elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> If questioned, and if any of my readers feel disposed to consult the writings of others on the subject, dare I ask them to glance their eyes over Hume's *Essay on a Providence and Future State*? Perhaps not. Let me refer them, in that case, to "Ellis' Knowledge of Divine Things, from Revelation, not from Reason or Nature;"<sup>21</sup> or, to a shorter, and to me still more satisfactory if not more conclusive treatise, the [44] "Without Faith, without God," of John Barclay, A. M., published by me, with a Preface, in 1836.

<sup>20</sup> "Assurance of Faith," Chapter V.

<sup>21</sup> London: Tegg and Son, 1837.

Secondly. The materials of a divine revelation being furnished by God himself in human language, mere *human mind* can so far apprehend them as to discover therein *differences*, and consequently *resemblances*, between God and man. Without the materials thus supplied by God, the very idea of a Being superior to man would have remained unknown to fleshly mind; indeed, in that case, it would have had nothing *divine* upon which to operate and exercise itself at all. But having these materials supplied, no new creation of its faculties is requisite to enable it to discover *differences* between the Being therein revealed and man; and to deal with these materials in other respects after a fleshly fashion.

Thirdly. If any man is to understand scripture, not as it appears to *human mind*, but in its true sense as emanating from *divine mind*, then a new creation or formation of his mental capacities becomes requisite. *Human forms* of intellect must in this case give way to and be superseded by *divine forms*. And when this happens, but not till then, all those notions of *differences* and *analogies* between God and man, which to mere fleshly mind are the utmost that the volume of inspiration conveys, are superseded by and swallowed up in views of such a complete, decided, and deadly opposition subsisting between the one and the other, as necessarily issues in the destruction of all that is human by what is divine.

Otherwise expressed, the import of the last three paragraphs is: — 1. Apart altogether from a divine revelation conveyed in human language, man must for ever have confounded the creature with the Creator, from total [45] inability to discriminate between the one and the other; or, rather, he must have remained for ever destitute of the knowledge of the existence of such a being as the Creator at all. 2.

Possessed of a divine revelation in matter and language, but with a mere fleshly mind to interpret it, man undoubtedly could acquire the idea of a *difference* between the Creator and the creature, but of such a *difference* as implies *resemblance* between them at bottom. For, 3, it is only in consequence of possessing a divine revelation in matter and language, along with the earnest of divine mind to understand it, that any man is enabled to apprehend the thorough and essential *opposition* in which the Creator and the creature stand to each other. A view of the *difference* and yet of the *resemblance* between God and man, acquired by mere fleshly mind in consequence of its operating by means of its fleshly faculties upon the materials of a divine revelation, is, then, the connecting link between that total ignorance of God which is natural to the human mind, and that real and spiritual knowledge of God which is the result of the formation in any one, through the meaning of revelation disclosed to him by God himself, of the earnest of divine mind. Total ignorance of God can of course have no religious results at all. Notions of God, springing from the discovery of *difference* and yet resting for their basis on supposed *resemblance* between God and man, give birth to such fancies, derived from a mere fleshly understanding of the subject, as that of the soul's natural and inherent immortality, that is, of its naturally possessing a divine attribute; 1 Tim. 6:16; that of the influence of human virtue upon future happiness, or of what influences man also influencing God, in spite of the obvious fact of [46] one natural event happening to all; Eccles. 2:14; 9:3; 3:18-21; and so on. Whereas, views conferred by God himself, and implying the manifestation to the individual of an essential *opposition* subsisting between God and man, are attended with the discovery of what is creaturely being, through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, swallowed up in what is divine; of Adam's soul or earthly mind being changed into, and swallowed up in, Christ's Spirit or heavenly mind; 1 Cor. 15:45-49; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; of the divine righteousness of the Son of God superseding and destroying creature virtue, no less than creature guilt; Rom. 3:20-22; 10:3,4; 5:21; 6:23; and so on.

Surely, now, the principle of divine inversion must be abundantly manifest.

It is the mutual antagonism or opposition necessarily subsisting between the nature of the Creator and that of the creature.

I acknowledge, that in thus expressing myself I am, to fleshly mind, laying myself open to a charge of assumption. I acknowledge, that there exists no human principle upon which the principle of divine inversion can be founded. Instead of the *opposition* between God and man resting upon the *difference* between them as its basis, the fact is the very reverse: the *difference* in question being derived from, and having its basis in, inherent and essential *opposition*. The opposition existing between God and man, and between divine things and human things, is itself then an ultimate principle. It is of the nature of light. And like all that deserves truly so to be considered, so far from being susceptible of proof, it constitutes in the minds of those who have been taught from [47] above the evidence, — the grand, exclusive, and overwhelming evidence, — not only of itself, but of every thing likewise that is natural and inferior. Ephes. 5:13.

There is another way of presenting the subject, which some of my readers may prefer.

1. The mutual inversion or opposition subsisting between things human and things divine, is not a human principle, but matter of immediate divine revelation.
2. When once made known, the principle, as divinely true, and seen to be so in its own light, carries along with it thenceforward all the power, weight, and irresistibility of self-evidence.

I may conclude this section, by trying to exhibit to the eye the whole subject-matter of it in the following form. It is the doctrine of inversion, exhibited in the form of inversion.

Things of man — Resemblance  
opposed to  
Things of God. — Difference } between the one and the other.

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## SECTION VII.

### FIRST SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

#### DIVINE REVELATION *VERSUS* HUMAN REASON.

There is no dogma more strenuously contended for by deists, and by deistical professors of a spurious kind of Christianity, than that the supremacy of human reason over divine revelation shall be acknowledged: or, to give such characters the benefit of stating the proposition in their own way, that human reason shall be submitted to as the sole test of revelation; and that whatever religious views human reason cannot receive, and, consequently, is pleased to condemn, shall as a matter of course be rejected by us as absurd and erroneous. An opinion, which, were it correct, would unquestionably not only overturn the main principle of this essay, by shewing me to have been mistaken in assuming divine inversion to be a fundamental doctrine of the word of God; but, what is of infinitely more importance, would destroy the possibility of any revelation, superior to the operations and discoveries of mere reason, ever being made by the Creator to the creature.

Reason is, as to human things, our best, may I not also say, our only<sup>22</sup> guide. By its assistance and direction [49] we provide for the supply of our daily wants; by it, are we prepared and qualified for every species of mere intellectual effort; and it is by means of it, that the dictates of conscience are understood, tested, and ascertained to be genuine.<sup>23</sup> Reason, in a word, is the human or fleshly mind itself. And no man, gifted with even a very low degree of understanding, would disparage reason when acting within her legitimate province; or would attempt to withdraw any thing belonging to time and sense from her cognizance, authority, and control.

<sup>22</sup> I somewhat doubt the propriety of saying so, when I consider the advantages which reason, even in a fleshly point of view, has derived from revelation: for instance, from the law of Moses, the book of Proverbs, and our Lord's sermon on the mount. But, really, I have no wish to appear hypercritical to the deifiers of reason. Hence, I make them large concessions.

<sup>23</sup> The spirit of the remarks in the last note here again applies.

Nay, farther, reason, when it has that *negative* assistance and illumination which the word of God affords even to mere fleshly intellect,<sup>24</sup> is an admirable detector of what is false and spurious in pretended divine revelations. It can see through the Hindu Shastras. It can fasten upon and point out the plagiarisms, the bad faith, the loose morality, and the absurdities of the Koran. It can, also, argue most admirably upon what are called the evidences of revealed religion: marshalling the testimonies of heathens and fathers; acutely discerning those points in regard to which persons commonly denominated infidels have tripped; bringing analogy and fact to bear against almost every possible objection which can occur to the sceptical mind; (generally, by the way, in so doing, manifesting no small degree of scepticism itself;) and performing well all those operations, which God in his infinite wisdom seems to have assigned to the pioneers and scavengers of Chris-[50]tianity. It can detect, and hold up to withering contempt, the fallacy of transubstantiation; can expose the abominations of the confessional; and can rouse the indignation of mankind against the usurpations of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Not only so, it can even consider, and dispute intelligently about, a vast variety of topics still more strictly speaking Christian: such as guilt, punishment, atonement, pardon, humanity of Christ, his divine Sonship; and can

Reason high,  
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.<sup>25</sup>

But human speculations, human reasonings, and human conclusions upon such matters constitute the boundaries of reason. "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further," is God's own limit impressed upon her. Absolute and infallible certainty in regard to such topics it is impossible for her to attain to: for admirably has the poet, from whose magnificent production I have taken the words just quoted, observed, concerning those who indulge in such speculations —

"They find no end, in wandering mazes lost."<sup>26</sup>

Human mind can come up to the verge of divine mind; it can appear to approach to the confines of the kingdom of heaven: but upon the sacred soil itself it never has entered — it never can enter. A barrier is interposed between human reason and divine revelation, which it is absolutely impossible for the former ever to overstep.

<sup>24</sup> That is, when revelation, made known to it *in language*, has afforded it an opportunity for the exercise of its own natural power of observing *differences* and *resemblances* between what is human and divine. See towards the conclusion of last section.

<sup>25</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book II., lines 558-560.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, line 561.

[51] And whence does this impossibility arise?

From the essential difference subsisting between divine mind and human mind; rather, from the necessary antagonism or opposition of the one to the other.

Soul or the fleshly mind of man, Rom. 8:5-7, is necessarily inferior to, and necessarily contrasted with, Spirit or the glorified mind of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 22:17. And this, because Adam never was and never could be, in any respect whatever, more than *the type*, image, or shadow, that is, the creature form *of him that was to come*. Rom. 5:14. Reason, as another appellation of man's mind, is therefore at the utmost merely *a shadow* of divine revelation, as another appellation of God's mind manifested, made known, or communicated. Or, man's mind and God's mind may be distinguished, if the phraseology be liked better, by calling them, *shadowy reason* and *substantial reason*.

Now *shadow*, we all know, can take no hold on *substance*. This fact may be satisfactorily evinced to the dullest understanding, by directing attention, at different periods of the day, to the first sun-dial which may happen to present itself to us. Doing so, it cannot fail to be observed, that instead of the shadow of the gnomon having any power whatever over the gnomon itself, the gnomon, as light advances, has its shadow completely under control: so much so, that, supposing us to live in a tropical climate, at the moment of noon, when the sun is exactly vertical or in the zenith, there can be no shadow at all.

Further, had we never beheld the substance by which any given shadow was projected; rather, to speak more correctly, had we never seen any thing else except *sha-[52]dows*; in attempting to draw conclusions from *shadow* to *substance*, (a thing, by the way, under the supposed circumstances of the case, impossible,)<sup>27</sup> while, in a certain sense and inferior degree we *might reason correctly*, nevertheless, we should find ourselves in every main and important particular *decidedly wrong*. We *might be in the right*, as to the general outline of the *shadow* corresponding to the outline of the *substance*: although even this is questionable, seeing that the sun, shifting the size and appearance of the shadow of the gnomon from its first appearance at early dawn to its absorption in the gnomon itself at high noon, would, if the gnomon itself were unseen or unlocked to, lead to a series of constantly

varying and erroneous conclusions. An inference as to the size and form of the gnomon, deduced from the appearance of its shadow at seven o'clock in the morning, would differ *toto cælo* from a similar inference deduced from the appearance of matters at eleven o'clock. Even supposing us *right*, however, as to the correspondence of the *outlines* of both, were we to venture to conclude from the indubitable *properties* of the *shadow* to the *properties* of the *substance*, — being, agreeably to the terms of the hypothesis, ignorant of the *substance* itself, — must not our conclusion be from facts known, to the existence of similar facts in connexion with that which is unknown? [53] But if so, assuredly we should find ourselves *wrong*. For instance, to infer (and what else, under the supposed circumstances, could we do?) that, because the shadow was continually altering in appearance and dimensions, therefore the gnomon was continually altering its appearance and dimensions likewise; to infer (and what besides could we do?) that, because the shadow had no tangible properties, therefore the gnomon could have no tangible properties either; and so, in other respects, to infer from the qualities of the shadow the existence of similar qualities in the substance, — the only way in which, under such circumstances, we could reason, — would betray us into incessant and necessary blundering. Who, bestowing even a glance upon such illustrations, sees not, that from *shadow* to *substance* no valid conclusion can ever be drawn? Nay, to express the matter more accurately, that from *shadow* to *substance*, — supposing us to possess no knowledge of *substance* except what we were left to gather from *shadow* itself, — it is absolutely impossible that any advance whatever could be made.

<sup>27</sup> See Hume's *Essay on a Providence and Future State*, and Barclay's *Without Faith, Without God*, both already referred to: also, Ellis's work. The impossibility may appear by putting to ourselves the following question: — As *shadowy* beings ourselves, and as naturally conversant only with *shadows*, supposing the idea of *substance* never to have been presented to us by a being competent to reveal it, what is there in us, or around us, to suggest it to our minds? Must not *shadows* and *shadowy* things have been to us, in such a supposed case, all that we could ever have conceived of?

Still further; whatever resemblances may subsist between the gnomon of the sun-dial and its shadow, the relation in which, properly speaking, they stand to each other, is that of antagonism or opposition. But the renitency, resistance, or struggle of the shadow is unavailing. It is an illustration of the Chinese idea, of the conflict between "the egg and the stone." The continued existence of the shadow, such as it is, lies all along at the mercy of the gnomon; or, rather, of light, by which through the medium of the gnomon the shadow is projected. And when light has attained to its zenith, the conflict is terminated; for shadow, then identified with its substance, expires.

[54] Such is an apt and instructive illustration of the relation in which human reason the *shadow*, stands to divine revelation the *substance*; of their mutual antagonism or opposition; and of the utter impotency of reason, as well as of its ultimate and complete destruction, in the conflict to which its temporary existence has given birth.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> To those who may be disinclined to attach importance to a mere illustration, however cogent and striking, let me again recommend an attentive and dispassionate perusal of Hume's *Essay on "a Providence and Future State,"* where they will find the subject of which I am now treating handled *negatively*, — alas! of its *positive* bearings, poor Hume had no conception! — with that inimitable power and acuteness which are almost peculiar to this author. Observe, it is with Hume's principle of our inability even to suspect the causes of the phenomena presented to us apart from information communicated, not with his insinuated conclusion, that I am in agreement.

Over the mind of God as substance, reason as shadow has no power whatever. But the mind of God as revealed being the substance of reason, and that by which reason is temporarily projected, has, whenever and wherever exerted, power over it.

By its utmost efforts, and this, too, with all the assistance *negatively* which a written revelation affords to it, reason can trace no more than a faint and shadowy outline of divine revelation: an outline

which, as divine light advances and increases, is continually shifting its position and altering its form; and which is, therefore, forcing reason to alter continually its conclusions even as to the outline itself.<sup>29</sup> And if reason find herself *out* — find her-[55]self constantly puzzled and mystified — even in that which, in a *negative* point of view, may be regarded as her legitimate province, how much more awfully does she go astray, when, stepping out of that province, she attempts *positively* to bring down and accommodate *divine mind* to her conceptions of *human mind*! Because change is necessarily characteristic of man's mind, reason cannot help fancying, and acting upon the fancy, that change is continually occurring in God's mind likewise; — because [56] there is nothing real or substantial in man's mind, reason necessarily attaches the notion of something shadowy to things spiritual and divine; — and so on: thus always and of necessity blundering in her attempts to draw conclusions from the shadowy to the substantial.

<sup>29</sup> How remarkably has this been verified in the ever-varying phases, which, for the last hundred years, have been presented by Rationalism in Germany: its glorious scholars, its profound thinkers, and its metaphysically-minded theologians constantly shifting their ground, according as the shadowy outline of divine things, apprehended by the shadowy principle of human reason, appeared to shift likewise! The slightest degree of *divine*, and therefore of *substantial* knowledge, suffices to blow the gorgeous, but airy and fanciful structures of their Semlers, their Lessings, their Eichhorns, their Paulus', their Bretschneiders, their Steinbarts, and their Strauss' to atoms. And yet, these men have done good. Aye, much good. They have shaken the fabric of fleshly religion to its very base. It now totters to its fall. Would to God that some one intimately acquainted by divine teaching with the scriptures of truth, gifted at once with powers of analysis and condensation, and conversant with the German speculations in theology, were raised up, qualified, and disposed to assign to the alleged discoveries of our neighbours their proper place: able impartially to admit what they have really accomplished, and as able impartially to reject their mere vapouring pretensions. The Germans are certainly, intellectually considered, a glorious people. Never yet, that I am aware of, has the true value of their fearless and magnificent speculations been in this country appreciated. Information may be gleaned from the late Hugh James Rose's elegant but declamatory "History of Protestantism in Germany;" from Pusey's somewhat terser and profounder work, entitled "Causes of Rationalism in Germany," in answer to Rose's book; from Rose's Letter to the Bishop of London, in reply; and other works of a similar description. But such productions merely trifle with our curiosity. They do not go to the bottom of the matter. Indeed, our *soi-disant* divines in Great Britain seem to me as if they were afraid of the progress and results of German theological inquiries becoming known among us. This will never do. Truth has nothing to fear from any attacks. It is error, only, that quails before the manly, and well-directed, and unsparing assaults of its enemies. Let us know what the profound scholars of Germany have thought and said respecting the religion of Christ Jesus. It may be that *human errors* have been exploded by them: upon the *truth of God* we know that it is impossible for them to have made any impression. What, then, have they actually accomplished? *Fiat justitia; ruat cælum.* It may be that, as a result of their investigation, the clergy and spurious churches are apt to be deprived of their usurped dominion over the consciences of men. But should this be to us, who love God's word, subject-matter of regret? Rev. 19:1-3.

And this difference between reason and revelation is antagonistic. For revelation stands opposed, and must ever stand opposed, to all reason's views of those matters which are *truly* spiritual and divine. Reason, it is true, may concentrate all her forces, and direct her energies with increasing might, against revelation, as the light shed by revelation increases; just as shadow becomes more dense, better defined, and more concentrated, as the period of noon approaches. But as shadow never acquires the slightest power over substance, however short and well-defined it may become; — being always subject to the control of substance, and always gradually but certainly progressing towards absorption in it; — so, never has reason acquired, never can it acquire, the slightest power over revelation. Reason, even in its most vigorous forms, is always subject to the control of revelation; and is always gradually but certainly advancing towards the period, when in revelation, its glorious substance, it shall be ultimately and completely swallowed up.

Quitting, however, the illustration which I have founded on the analogy subsisting between the

gnomon of the sundial's projection and absorption of its shadow, and Spirit's projection and absorption of soul, — an illustration, the minute and faithful accuracy of which must commend itself to every spiritually-enlightened mind, — I proceed to answer by anticipation the inference which, I am aware, will by fleshly mind be drawn from what I have stated.

[57] "You make revelation the opponent of reason. Then, according to you, the light of revelation entering into our minds, we necessarily become irrational!"<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> A favourite, and, to those who know no better, most plausible objection of the whole deistical school, from the first dawn of Christianity down to the present day. It is, as a matter of course, adopted by the Rationalist and Socinian parties, although far from being confined to them. Taylor, the infidel, in his *Diegesis*, has made most ample use of it. Of the *Lion*, a periodical conducted by himself and Richard Carlile, for the avowed purpose of propagating Deistical and Atheistical sentiments, it may be said to be the staple argument. Indeed, it is obtruded on the notice of the readers *usque ad nauseam*. How easily is it seen through and put aside by all who possess the earnest of spirit, and are capable of using that heavenly weapon! But *only by them*. — By the way, speaking of Taylor, have my readers seen the masterly confutation of his *Diegesis*, by Dr. Pye Smith, in his *Syntagma*?

Certainly, in so far as views truly spiritual and divine are concerned, our minds, in consequence of having undergone illumination by the mind of God, see matters under an aspect exactly the *opposite* of that in which they are seen by fleshly mind. But our sentiments are not on that account *irrational*, in the sense of their being incongruous and absurd. For, first, it is by views which are *substantially rational*, or which constitute the *substance of reason*, that notions appertaining to mere *shadowy reason* have in us been superseded. And, secondly, so far from the imparting to us of divinely revealed truth having subverted or destroyed in our minds what is true in reason, we now, in consequence of the higher ground which we occupy, see natural facts more clearly, are enabled to understand their mutual relationships and bearings more correctly, and can from them draw conclusions to the full at least *as rational* as those can do, who are possessed of no higher principles than those of mere human nature.<sup>31</sup> Nay, by having had [58] the mind of God in some measure opened up to us, in addition to those human principles, views, and relations which are known to us in common with other men, we have not only become acquainted with a new and higher set of principles, but are likewise enabled to perceive the connexion of these with what we had previously known. In a word, revelation, so far from overturning what is true in reason, tends rather to its confirmation and establishment.

<sup>31</sup> I confess that, but for my understanding of divine truth, such as it is, I never could have either understood or relished Mr. George Field's "Outlines of Analogical Philosophy," a work which, in spite of all its deficiencies, I regard as one of the most interesting and valuable contributions to metaphysics which England has for a long time produced; and which, although far from being perfect in itself, contains most important suggestions, of which future inquirers will no doubt avail themselves.

But revelation is the unsparing and deadly foe of every attempt on the part of reason to intrude on the province of the spiritual and the divine. It exposes her ignorance; it unmasks her hypocrisy; and it gives to see through the necessarily false and delusive notions of the religion of Christ, entertained by fleshly-minded men however eminent, in a way, and to an extent, which only those who have themselves been taught from above can form any conception of. It does more, it destroys the whole fabric of what is denominated Natural Religion. For it shews, that so far from man being able of himself to find out any of the things of God, he could neither have spoken about nor even have conceived of them at all, unless a revelation of them, couched in human language, had been vouchsafed. And that even with all the advantages of possessing a revelation *externally*, and of being able thereby to detect *differences* and *resemblances* between divine and human things, he can form no conception whatever of its true, spiritual, and *internal* meaning, with his mere fleshly [59] mind: his *natural religion*, if such an expression must be employed, consisting in the accommodating of divine statements and discoveries to his previously acquired natural notions; while *spiritual religion* is the

superseding of such previously acquired natural notions, by views which are in reality heavenly and divine.

In a word, revelation, while it leaves reason in full and uncontested possession of her own domain of earthly and natural notions, is opposed to and destructive of every view naturally taken up by reason, concerning things which are superhuman and supernatural. Reason, as shadowy herself and as a quality of a shadowy nature, may appropriately enough deal with shadowy subjects; but let her beware of venturing to force herself into the region of the substantial. Can shrewd fleshly minds overlook here an obvious application of the Fable of *the viper and the file*?<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> No great effort of mind will be required to discover, that I am not a follower of Berkeley. A comparison of his "Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous," with what is above set down, can hardly fail to satisfy any one who will take the trouble to institute it, that while with the acute and learned Bishop matter is shadowy and mind substantial, with the writer of these pages human body and human mind are both and equally shadowy.

Let me now attempt to throw the substance of all that goes before into the form of a distinct and intelligible proposition. — While, in regard to views which are merely natural or fleshly, whether these are connected with ordinary human affairs or with religion, it is reason or the mere human mind which grasps or takes hold of them; yet whenever views which are really spiritual and divine are concerned, it is not reason or the human mind, a mere shadowy principle, which grasps or takes hold of [60] them, but they, as substantial, which grasp or take hold of reason or the human mind.

Reason, or the mere human mind, is endowed with certain capacities, faculties, or forms. These forms it throws around or puts upon every topic presented to it, of which it acquires any conception whatever. Being itself shadowy, however, and all its faculties or mental forms being shadowy likewise, it of necessity can grasp nothing but shadows, — shadowy views and topics, — corresponding to its own shadowy nature. And if topics in themselves divine, and therefore substantial, are presented to it, never can it grasp, conceive, or take hold of them as what they are *in themselves* or as *substantial*; but only as what it is *in itself* or as *shadowy*, by bringing them down to and investing them with its own *shadowy forms*: that is, in other and fewer and more appropriate words, reason cannot take hold or conceive of divine and spiritual things at all. On the other hand, although the *shadowy forms* of human mind cannot grasp or take hold of the *substantial forms* of divine mind; yet the *substantial forms* of divine mind can grasp or take hold of the *shadowy forms* of human mind. Man's mind can never, under any conceivable circumstances, take hold of God's mind; but God's mind can, whenever he pleases and to whatever extent he pleases, take hold of man's mind. Now, this is realized in every case in which the divine views which are contained in scripture are opened up to and rendered the views of any individual. The doctrines of scripture constitute the forms of divine mind, in so far as these are capable of being put upon, and thereby of superseding, human mind. John 6:63. And in every instance of a person being taught from above, through the [61] medium of the scriptures, — and there is no other medium of divine teaching, *Ibid.* — this is what invariably and necessarily happens. The person so taught finds, to his great astonishment no less than delight, that, instead of his having been enabled to take hold of divine truth, divine truth has taken hold of him. The forms of human mind have, by the manifestation or rather superinduction of that truth, been in him to a certain degree, in so far as religion is concerned, superseded by the forms of divine mind. He is thus, not by efforts of his own, but in opposition to all his efforts and by an immediate act of God, raised above himself, by being rendered a partaker of the earnest of the glorified mind of Christ. He is, not by means of his previous voluntary submission, but in spite of all his previous decided opposition to what is spiritual and divine, made a new creature.

Expressing the same truth in a manner somewhat analogous to that of Kant and other German metaphysicians, I would say: — naturally, it is the *subjective* which attempts to operate on the *objective*; spiritually, it is the *objective* which actually operates on the *subjective*. Reason the *subjective*

strives naturally, by conforming it to herself, to drag down revelation the *objective* to her own level; Ps. 50:21; whereas revelation the *objective* succeeds spiritually in lifting up reason the *subjective* to its own level; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:3,4. The tendencies of reason and revelation thus stand directly opposed the one to the other; but success only crowns the efforts of the latter. Of all this, we are furnished with a beautiful and appropriate illustration in the parable of the sower, Mat. 13:3-8; 19-23. The way-side, the stony ground, and the thorny ground hearers are all so [62] many instances of men, by dint of reason or creature mind, attempting to understand revelation, and failing in the attempt. The good ground hearers, on the contrary, afford to us an example of revelation or divine mind, in spite of the opposition of human mind, communicating the understanding of itself, and thereby realizing what all the efforts of reason had been unsuccessful in accomplishing.<sup>33</sup> See, also, John 1:13. Reason naturally the *subjective*, and revelation the *objective*, stand thus opposed to each other: reason exerting herself in vain to subject revelation to her sway; but revelation, whenever and [63] wherever her might is put forth, always and necessarily realizing the subjugation of reason.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The view given in the text may be thus expressed: — Naturally, reason is the *subject* or recipient of views presented to it, or of different *objects*; spiritually, divine revelation assumes the character of *subject*, and reason is then its principal *object*. Now reason, as the *subject*, naturally and necessarily conforms every *object* presented to it to its own nature, so that every successive discovery made by it is merely the increase, strengthening, and enlargement of itself. But divine revelation, viewed as the *subject*, has the opposite tendency, and has also the power to conform all things or *objects* presented to it to its own nature; so that every successive being or view upon which as its *object* revelation operates, becoming thereby conformed to it, enlarges and increases the sphere of its triumphs. In the parable of the sower, where the truth now spoken of finds a most appropriate illustration, in the three instances of the way side, the rocky ground, and the thorny ground hearers, first enumerated — it is reason which attempts to operate upon revelation; or it is the human mind as *subject* which attempts to conform to itself the divine views revealed as *objects*. Hence the failure in the whole of these instances. But in the fourth and last case, in which *the seed is received into an understanding heart*, it is revelation which operates upon reason; or, revelation which naturally stands in the attitude of a mere object to reason, instead of leaving reason to attempt to grasp or take hold of it, — as happened in the other three cases, and as happens in every mere fleshly view of religion, — actually, in this last case, grasps or takes hold of reason, thereby conforming reason to the nature of revelation. — Perhaps, considering reason as *subject* and revelation as *object*, I may be better understood, if I say, — naturally, the *subject* reason attempts to conform to itself the *object* revelation — spiritually, the *object* revelation succeeds in conforming to itself the *subject* reason. In whatever point of light we view the matter, deadly and irreconcileable opposition between reason and revelation is always manifest.

<sup>34</sup> Rather, the destruction of reason, by its being merged or swallowed up in revelation. In other words, the *shadowy* is absorbed in the *substantial*.

Scripture presents the same truth very simply and very beautifully in these words: — *The natural man* (ψυχικος ανθρωπος, *man with a soul or fleshly mind*) *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth, see the Greek,) all things, yet he himself is judged (discerned) of no man.* 1 Cor. 2:14,15. Words which, whatever direct and primary reference they may have had to the apostles themselves, involve the grand truth of which I am treating; namely, that there exists an inherent and necessary opposition between natural and spiritual mind: an opposition so decided, that soul, fleshly mind, or reason cannot receive, know, or understand spirit, divine mind, or revelation, owing to soul being a shadowy principle, and to the necessary inability of shadow to take hold of substance; while spirit or divine mind, as a substantial principle, takes hold of soul or creature mind, understands it, indeed goes through it and through it, and in the very act of doing so merges it in itself for ever.

## SECTION VIII.

### SECOND SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

#### THE WILL OF MAN THE OPPOSITE OF THE WILL OF GOD; AND *VICE VERSA*.

*The mind<sup>35</sup> of flesh is enmity or opposition to God*, says the apostle Paul, speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 8:7. And scripture is from beginning to end a series of illustrations of this truth. It exhibits man's mind uniformly and necessarily aiming at objects, not merely different from, but opposite to, those which are aimed at by God's mind: man's mind under one form or another *sowing to the flesh*, and as a matter of course *of the flesh reaping corruption*; God's mind, on the contrary, in Christ and in those who are possessed of the earnest of his risen nature, *sowing to the Spirit*, and *of the Spirit reaping life everlasting*. Gal. 6:8.

<sup>35</sup> Φρονημα, a verbal noun, the word used here, signifies more than what we commonly understand by mere intellect. *Disposition*, as implying habitual tendency, and its effect volition, is perhaps the most appropriate meaning which can be assigned to it. In Matt. 16:23, the verb from which it is derived is translated *relishest* by Campbell, and *regardest* by Penn. — Macknight's Note, No. 2, on Rom. 8:5, may be looked at. Not that I attach any importance to that learned and laborious Commentator's sentiments, where pure and vital godliness is concerned: of his total unfitness to form any conceptions of which, we can scarcely possess a better illustration than his paraphrase of this very passage, Rom. 8:5-7. And yet, his acquaintance with the meanings of words entitles his opinions, on a matter of mere criticism, to some weight. I have been much interested by a perusal of the observations of the able, deeply-read, and distinguished Professor Tholuck, of Halle, upon Φρονεω and Φρονημα, as occurring on the passage just now referred to, in his valuable Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans.

[65] Dropping the figurative phraseology of the last sentence, and expressing my meaning in plain terms, I observe, that the aim or purpose of all the volitions of man may with truth be asserted to be, to promote some object terminating in the supposed advantage of self; Gen. 3:4-6; John 11:47-50; whereas the aim or purpose of all God's volitions is to advance his own glory, or to make his character and perfections known. Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11; 5:12,13. See also 1 Cor. 10:31, and Psalm 104:31. That is, the will of man and the will of God stand in complete opposition the one to the other. Man has himself for his end, and God has himself for his: a state of things implying so decided a conflict or collision between the will of man and the will of God, that the purposes of the one can only be carried into effect at the expense of disappointing and frustrating the purposes of the other.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Yet, to a spiritually-enlightened mind, there appears a sense in which creature-will actually succeeds in accomplishing the object at which it aims. Rather, in which creature-will, aiming at an inferior object and an inferior advantage, finds, to its astonishment, that, while it fails in realizing the object *directly* aimed at, its errors are nevertheless rendered subservient to the attainment of a superior object and a superior advantage. It is its own fancied interests which human will wishes and labours to secure. And these, blessed be God, are actually secured, in and through the appearance and work of Christ Jesus. Not, however, in the way aimed at, but in one that is perfectly opposite: for temporal advantages, or something like a continuance or perpetuation of this present life, constituted the utmost boundary of the desires of man's fleshly will; and with the attainment of these he fancies that he would be satisfied: whereas, the destruction of this present life, and of every thing connected with human nature, (or the disappointment of his fleshly will,) through the medium of bestowing upon man eternal life, and thereby elevating him to the possession of the divine nature, is the manner in which he is really and ultimately satisfied. As to the desires and wishes actually cherished by man, he is disappointed: but as having conferred upon him blessings such as naturally he had no conception of, and consequently was unable to anticipate, his disappointment is more than lost sight of — indeed, is completely absorbed, in the enjoyments of which he is unintentionally and unexpectedly made a partaker. His interests are provided for, not in the way aimed at by himself, but in one that is infinitely superior.

[66] This leads me to draw attention to the nature of the opposition subsisting between the will of God and that of man. God's will intelligently opposes the will of man; but man's will does not

intelligently oppose the will of God:<sup>37</sup> and this, just for the simple reason that of God's will man is by nature, and while he continues possessed of mere fleshly mind and principles, profoundly and entirely ignorant. But, notwithstanding, man's will does set itself in opposition to the will of God, in so far as it aims at an end, object, or purpose, or a series of ends, objects, or purposes, which are exactly the reverse of those at which God aims. To procure the fancied good and advance the fancied interests of self is the sole and exclusive object of man's will, and this even when it assumes the religious form; Rom. 10:3; to promote that which is truly good, the manifestation and diffusion of his own glory or the principle of eternal life, is the one and exclusive object of God's will; Rev. 4:11; John 17:3. Man's aims are earthly, God's are heavenly; man's are narrow and contracted, God's are expansive and unlimited; man's are transient, God's are lasting; man's are shadowy and fallacious, God's are substantial and infallible; man's even if realized are paltry and contemptible, God's when realized are found to be of supreme and eternal importance. Such is the nature of the opposition between a will of ignorance and a will of knowledge. Man does not know what God is aiming at, and therefore prosecutes his own ends in utter ignorance of what shall actually be accomplished; God on the contrary knows what man is aiming at, besides prosecuting *his* ends with the perfect and absolute [67] certainty of their being accomplished. A will which derives its origin from ignorance can have, it is clear, no chance whatever of success, in maintaining opposition to a will which has its foundation in infallible knowledge: but an opposition, notwithstanding, the will of man does maintain, which is productive of opposition from the will of God in return; and the conflict between the rival wills admitting of no compromise or reconciliation, and being carried out to the greatest possible extent on both sides, has, as it can have, but one conceivable issue.

<sup>37</sup> Acts 3:17; 13:27.

Some interesting and instructive examples of this decided and complete opposition of the will of man to the will of God, and of the will of God to the will of man, may be cited from the Scriptures.

The first shall be that of Joseph and his brethren. They, with a view to gratify their feelings of envy, malignity, and revenge, sold him to certain Ishmaelitish merchants, by whom they knew that he would be conveyed as a slave into the land of Egypt, there, in all probability, to pine away during the remainder of his life in bitter and hopeless captivity. God, who was aiming at the elevation of Joseph to all but sovereign power in Egypt, and at the rendering of his authority subservient to the advantage even of those by whom he had been thus so causelessly and cruelly treated, made use of the abominable feelings cherished by his brethren towards him as the grand means of carrying his designs into effect. *As for you*, said Joseph, — addressing his brethren upon the principle of the diametrical opposition subsisting between the will of man and the will of God, — *as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.* Gen. 50:20.

[68] Pharaoh affords another instance of the complete antagonism between the will of man and the will of God. The object of the Egyptian tyrant was to retain the children of Israel in their state of vassalage, and thereby to continue availing himself of their services: to which end, his numerous defiances of Jehovah, and repeated refusals to permit the departure of His chosen people, had reference. God's object on the contrary was, by ultimately rescuing Abraham's descendants from Pharaoh's yoke, to make the conduct of that monarch a means of manifesting his own divine and glorious perfections, and the complete and necessary subserviency of the will of the creature to that of the Creator. *And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.* Exod. 9:16; Rom. 9:17.

But by far the most affecting as well as most important proof of the opposition, essentially subsisting between human will and divine will, is that afforded by the case of our blessed Lord. In nailing Jesus to the accursed tree, the Jews had no intention whatever to carry the divine purposes into

effect: on the contrary, they were actuated solely by feelings of the most intense hatred of Christ and his cause, and by a desire as speedily and efficaciously as possible to sweep away both from the face of the earth. Little did they know, however, that, in the whole of their procedure towards the despised Nazarene, they were fully and to the very letter accomplishing the designs of Jehovah, as these stood recorded in the writings of Moses and the prophets. They, by crucifying Jesus, aimed at his destruction; God, by their crucifixion of him, aimed at raising him from the dead and setting him at his own [69] right hand as head over all. — *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up.* Acts 2:23,24.

Taking into account these and the innumerable other instances to the same effect with which the scriptures abound, it appears that man, in the exercise of his will, never aims at any thing higher than a creature result or object; while God, in the exercise of his will, always aims at a result or object worthy of himself the Creator. But creature will, besides in its nature and objects being inferior, is also adverse to that of the Creator. That is, the will of the creature and the will of the Creator are completely, irreconcileably, and for ever at variance the one with the other.

Notwithstanding all this, however, I am likely to be met with the objection, that the principle which I am attempting to lay down is not one of universal application; seeing that there *may be*, nay that there *are* cases, in which the object aimed at by the creature and that aimed at by the Creator are the same. "For instance: naturally," say the objectors, "men are capable of seeking God, and of attempting to obtain his favour: practices which, when engaged in, are so far from contradicting or opposing God, that they exactly correspond with what is his revealed will."

To this I answer, that the principle which I lay down is one of universal application, and admits not of a single exception. Man's will never yet aimed at the same object at which God's will aims; nay, by its very constitution, and by the circumstances in which man is placed, it is impossible for it to do so. And the instances adduced in [70] support of an identity of aim subsisting between the will of man and the will of God, are most unfortunately selected; affording, as they do, the most decided and indisputable proofs of the essential enmity or opposition of man's will to God's will, which it is within the range of human ability to conceive.

Even *à priori* the cases founded on might be held inept and unhesitatingly rejected, on the ground of their identifying mere human mind with divine mind, and mere human will with divine will; of their identifying the finite with the infinite, and the principle of creature selfishness with that of divine generosity. For if *naturally*, that is as possessed of the mere mind and will of a human being, I already am so far acquainted with God as to appreciate his character, which is implied in my seeking him; and so far possessed of his spirit as to cherish love towards him, which is implied in my attempting to obtain his favour; why it is obvious that, in the cases supposed, his mind and will are already mine; and that it must be the quintessence of absurdity to speak of my seeking for him whom I have already found, and of my desiring the favour of him whose favour as loving him it is impossible but that I must already possess! Under such supposed circumstances, known and loved as God already is by mere fleshly mind, what occasion is there for a supernatural revelation of his character, or for the formation in us of a new and heavenly principle? If limited mind naturally apprehend the unlimited Jehovah, and the selfish creature naturally love the generous Creator, why require to seek for him, or pretend to desire an interest in his love, seeing that the privileges avowedly sought after are already ours? — Out upon such fooleries! They proceed upon the principle of *identifying* the mind of mere [71] creature with that of the Creator, in the teeth of fleshly conscience suggesting that the two *differ*, and in opposition to the word of God shewing that they stand to each other in the attitude of deadly and inveterate foes. Indeed, the objection which I am now combating, and the examples cited in support of it, involve in themselves downright Pelagianism, or an ascription to the creature of the divine power of originating

its own salvation, in direct opposition to the language and meaning of scripture; and on this ground both the objection and the examples might, without more ado, be dismissed accordingly.

But as I prefer dealing with the objection *à posteriori*, let us turn our attention to matter of fact.

It is objected, first, that "men naturally, or by means of the exercise of the powers of their fleshly minds alone, may seek God."

In following after *the lust of the flesh*, 1 John 2:16, it will be readily conceded, that self-gratification and not the glory of God is the aim of the creature. Perhaps a similar concession will be made in respect of mere intellectual pursuits, or the indulgence of *the lust of the eye*. *Ibid.* That is, in both cases I assume it to be conceded that man, in what he aims at, necessarily takes up a position adverse to the aims, objects, or purposes of God. It is when fleshly religion, or *the pride of life*, *Ibid.*, comes into view, that men, themselves merely *soulical*, Jude 19, and therefore ignorant of the diametrical opposition subsisting between the religion of fleshly mind and that of divine mind, are found contending for the aims of the creature and those of the Creator being the same. That is, mere natural men distinguished for fleshly piety, having no conception of the opposition of *the pride of life* or [72] fleshly religion to the religion of Christ Jesus being as decided (I might correctly say *more decided*) as that of either *the lust of the flesh* or *the lust of the eye*, are ready, while they admit the opposition of the latter, to contend strenuously for the spiritual nature of the former, or for the identification of the religion of flesh with the religion of spirit. "Man may seek God naturally, or without any new creation of his mind," say such characters; "and is not this to cherish and cultivate a divine object, or to have an aim the same as that of God himself?" In opposition to this, I observe, no man ever yet under the influence of creature or human principles sought God. Man naturally seeks himself; or attempts, when religiously disposed and affected, to discover mere creature principles, whereby the agitations of conscience in him may be stilled and quieted. Micah 6:6; Acts 16:30; Rom. 10:3: also Matt. 19:16. If, while so engaged, God is pleased to reveal himself in Christ Jesus, there is necessarily made a discovery of something after which the individual was not seeking. He was aiming at the discovery of righteousness in himself, *a human object*; he is overwhelmed with astonishment at the manifestation to him of divine righteousness as his in Christ Jesus, *a divine object*. Rom. 10:3,4; Phil. 3:4-8.<sup>38</sup> He thenceforward discontinues seeking; because he has found God, or rather God has most unexpectedly by himself found him. Gal. 4:9. God is thus uniformly and necessarily found, not of those who seek him, but of those who seek him not. Isa. 65:1; [73] Rom. 10:20. Men naturally in search of something inferior to God of which they conceive themselves to stand in need, are from time to time astonished and delighted at having manifested to them that God, who was not previously in their thoughts, and after whom, from ignorance of him, it was impossible for them previously to enquire. To adopt John Barclay's beautiful simile, many a man who, like Saul the son of Kish, goes forth in search of something of inferior value, stumbles unexpectedly, by the good pleasure of Jehovah, upon a kingdom that fadeth not away.<sup>39</sup> The blunder of fleshly and natural men respecting this subject has arisen from their not understanding that the phrase, seekers of God, in Old Testament language, implies not persons ignorant of God, but those to whom a certain degree of manifestation of God had by faith during the Mosaic dispensation been conceded; and who, in consequence of this, were waiting and seeking for that higher manifestation of him, which, at a future period of the church, he had announced his intention of giving through the Messiah. Psalm 105:4.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Paul no doubt continued *seeking*, as is obvious from the context of the passage referred to, Phil. 3:8-14. And so did those who were his contemporaries, and like-minded with himself. *Ibid.* 15. Seeking God, now, however, is out of the question. The explanation of this apparent contradiction is found in the difference between the state of *reconciliation*, and the state of *salvation* of the church, afterwards taken notice of.

<sup>39</sup> *The Assurance of Faith Vindicated*. By John Barclay, A. M. p. 16, 3d Edition. Glasgow, 1825.

<sup>40</sup> Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, belonged to this body of seekers. He *asked*, *sought*, and *knocked*, as an

Old Testament believer, by means of his prayers and alms, presented in faith; and these, *having come up as a memorial before God*, at last he *received, found*, and had *the gates* of the New Testament Dispensation, or Heavenly Kingdom, *thrown open* to him. Acts 10, *throughout*. Matt. 7:7,8. See Luke 2:25-38.

Baffled in this, the objectors nevertheless return to the charge, alleging, —

Secondly, That "men unrenewed or possessed merely of natural mind may desire to obtain an interest in the divine favour: in so doing manifesting, not opposition, but agreement and accordancy, between their will and the will of God."

[74] Here again, however, our opponents are wrong, egregiously wrong. Natural or fleshly-minded men, in desiring to obtain the divine favour, as it is imagined they may do, exhibit the most complete and devilish opposition to the revealed will of God. For, in the first place, they display their ignorance of the fact, that the favour of God or his mercy unto eternal life was never capable of being obtained by a mere creature, and was never really commanded to be aimed at by a mere creature: only the Creator himself manifest in flesh having, by his obedience unto death, been able to procure it, as well as having actually, by that obedience, succeeded in procuring it; and we creatures enjoying the divine favour solely in and as one with him, — as being righteous in his righteousness, and as living in his life. It was the Lord Jesus who desired God's favour intensely and supremely, during the days of his flesh, as is manifest by the whole strain of his personal experience recorded in the book of Psalms: Ps. 42, 63, &c.: an experience but too often, by men ignorant of the truth, regarded and represented as that of mere creatures. I may admit, indeed I do admit, that during the forty years of the Apostolic ministry, or winding up of the Old Testament state, belief in Jesus as the fulfiller of divine law, and consequently as the Saviour, having been enjoined in the form of a command to be obeyed, God's favour during that period was, in a certain sense, proposed as an object of desire, or as what was to be sought after. This, however, was merely in subserviency to the manifestation of the fact, that God's favour is conferred unsought: Rom. 9:30: the obtaining of it having been impossible to fleshly mind; *Ibid.* 31-33; and the following after it having been a manifestation of fleshly mind. Rom. 10:3. [75] See also Rom. 10:20,21, and John 1:13. And, in the second place, those with whom I am disputing, in the objection on which they insist, display their total ignorance of the divine character as it is revealed in Christ Jesus: the whole work and mediation of the Son of God being intended to shew, in such a way as is adapted to the capacities of us creatures, that God, so far from being changeable as we are, is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*; and that, consequently, so far from having ever begun to cherish favour towards the beings of his hand, his favour towards them is from everlasting to everlasting unalterably the same. The man who seeks or pretends to seek for the divine favour is displaying his ignorance of God and opposition to him, by supposing God to be like himself, and therefore capable of changing his views and feelings towards him; that is, by supposing that although God may hate him *now*, he may nevertheless be induced to love him *at some future period*. On the other hand, a heavenly and spiritual view of the divine character, as imparted by God himself through his word, beholds God loving us *now*, and his love, so far from having had a beginning, to be *coeval with his own eternal existence*.<sup>41</sup> It is enabled to recognize God in his *I am*, that is, in his *true* character; and therefore, instead of engaging in the idle pursuit of his favour, as if he were a changeable being like ourselves, it is enabled to rejoice in the present and everlasting possession of his favour, as what, from his very nature, is, has been, and ever must be our portion. Can two objects, then, be conceived more [76] different, than, on the one hand, that of the creature who rejects the work and manifestation of God in Christ Jesus, in the very attempt to *make God his friend*; and who regards God as *changeable*, by expecting to derive from him *at some future period* a love which he does not enjoy in him even *now*: and, on the other hand, that of the Creator who represents all his favour to his creatures as flowing in the channel of the righteousness of Christ Jesus alone; and as being the same to the creature *at the present moment* that *from all eternity it has been*, and that *to all eternity it will be*? Surely, an attempt to *render God love* under the influence of an impression that he is *changeable*, an attempt which is invariably characteristic of *fleshly will*

when it exhibits religious tendencies, so far from being consistent with, must ever stand directly opposed to, such an apprehension of *God as love*, as is conveyed in the light of Christ Jesus, as implies a view of his character being *unchangeably and everlastinglly the same*, and as is productive of acquiescence and rejoicing in the determinations and actings of *divine will*.

<sup>41</sup> All this is implied in the expression, *God is love*. 1 John 4:8,16. Observe, it is not said that he *was love*, or that he *will be love*; but that he *is love*. His character is *eternally present*, and it is *eternally the same*.

The fact is, the objection which I have been engaged in answering proceeds upon the principle of the aim of the religion of fleshly mind, and that of the religion of divine mind, being the same. Whereas, so far from this being the case, not only do the two differ, but they stand directly opposed the one to the other.

Never, indeed, is the will of man seen by persons divinely taught to assume an attitude of more marked and decided hostility to the will of God, than when its tendencies and decisions of a religious nature are taken into account. Rather, should I say, it is only through the medium of fleshly religion, or of the principles by which [77] conscience in its fleshly form is actuated and the objects at which it aims, that, properly speaking, the opposition of human will to divine will exhibits itself at all.

Worldliness of motives and profligacy of conduct, although generally regarded as the worst aspects under which human nature can present itself, viewed in a certain light, appear to lose the characteristics of enmity to God altogether. For, in following after the gratification of sensual appetites, and in aiming at the acquisition of fame, God may not be in the thoughts of the individual; and although he is in reality pursuing a course opposed to the revealed character of God, the discordancy between his pursuits and it may never happen to attract his notice. Different, however, is the case where religion is concerned. There human will comes at once into direct collision with divine will. For fleshly religion cannot be maintained, except at the expense of opposing a direct and unqualified resistance to the religion of spirit. Man is by nature the sole end and object of his own pursuits, or he is by his very constitution a self-idolater; and this, owing to his having been made *after the divine image*. God is, by equal necessity, the sole end and object of all his views, plans, and operations, — he in this being *substantially*, what man is merely *shadowyly*; and he therefore, in loving himself supremely, and making his own glory the end of all his actions, assigning to himself no more than what is obviously and actually his due. We have thus two, not merely *distinct* but *antagonistic* ends, proposed to themselves by the creature and the Creator. Self is to man his own God, or the end of all his actions, especially of those of a religious kind; God is to himself, and to all who possess his nature, the sole and supreme end of all his and their actions. To set up [78] self as supreme, which is always done by fleshly religionists, is equivalent to an attempt to dethrone God; to set up God as supreme is of necessity to dethrone self. Under such circumstances, it is impossible that the religion of human nature and that of the divine nature can ever coalesce; nay, it is impossible that they can assume towards each other any attitude except a hostile one. Passing by the glaring illustrations of this which are afforded by man's original apostacy from God, in which he shewed all his religion to consist in listening to *the creature rather than to the Creator*; and by the procedure of the Jews towards our Lord and his apostles, in which the religion of flesh was, to their own awful detriment and even ruin, preferred by them to the religion of spirit; I observe that, in every idea and pursuit of man which is of a religious nature, contrariety to the revealed religion of God is apparent. Man, when fleshly religious, would fain propitiate God and obtain his favour, by abstaining from evil; God convicts man of folly in every such attempt, both by the accusations of his own natural conscience from time to time, and also by expressly shewing him that, even on the supposition of eternal life depending on the condition of abstinence from evil, he neither has fulfilled nor can fulfil the condition. Man, under the influence of natural religion, would strive to live for ever by keeping the divine commandments; Matt. 19:16; Acts 16:30; God, besides opening up views of the extent and spirituality of his law sufficient to startle the most self-righteous, Matt. 19:18-22, Rom. 7:7-13, James 2:10, suggests, that as the utmost lengths to which mere

human obedience has gone have never yet been able to ensure to any man the continued possession of the paltry life that [79] now is, as a matter of course still less influence can human righteousness have in procuring for any man life everlasting. Man, as religious, hopes to live for ever, by a due performance of the terms or conditions upon which he conceives future happiness to depend; God informs him, that, over and above his being totally unable to fulfil a single condition of eternal life, all the conditions upon which it depends have already and completely been fulfilled by Christ Jesus, God's well-beloved Son, and that, through the divine righteousness thus wrought out by him, eternal, that is divine life is unconditionally bestowed. Man, when driven from other fallacies, but still religious upon fleshly principles, would fain take hold of Christ, and thereby satisfy himself of his own safety; God informs him that his safety consists in Christ's taking hold of him. Man's grand desire is, in *his* fancied future state, to avoid evil, or *negatively* to be free from sufferings; and towards this most desirable result to them, the efforts and exercises of fleshly serious minds are directed: God proclaims, that, in the higher state of existence revealed by him, he is conferring good, or *positively* bestowing blessings and enjoyments. Man, in his highest religious views, aims at perpetuation of *self*, or of his present creature nature; God reveals self and creature nature as destroyed completely and for ever in the cross of Christ, and shews that it is a new creation called into existence through the resurrection of his own Son, or man as made divine in Christ glorified, 2 Peter 1:4, Ephesians 2:1-12, to whom everlasting existence is destined. Now, such being a fair abridgment on the one hand of the aims of human will, whenever it assumes the religious form; and on the other hand of the objects aimed at by the will of Jehovah, as made known to the Church; is it [80] possible to conceive two sets of objects more decidedly opposed the one to the other? Or two sets of objects, the accomplishment of the one of which implies more decidedly the disappointment of the other?

It will be observed, that in what precedes I have avoided saying anything directly of the *quaestio vexata* mooted respecting the freedom of the human will. This omission has been intentional on my part. A postponement of the consideration of the matter, however, was all that was thereby contemplated. For it never was my purpose to dismiss the present subject, and close this section, without directing attention to the flood of light which, by the doctrine of *divine inversion*, is shed upon it.

I say, by the doctrine of *divine inversion*: for, even independently of it, a decision is pronounced in every man's mind who understands that the will of the creature is of necessity dependent on the will of the Creator; and who has had opened up to him, by their divine author, those passages of scripture in which the completeness of the dependence of the former upon the latter is pointed out and asserted. If God be the doer of all things; Isaiah 45:7; Dan. 4:35; if man be in his hands like clay in the hands of the potter; Isaiah 45:9; Jeremiah 18:1-10; Rom. 9:20-24; and if every event which occurs be a fulfilment of the purposes of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10; Eph. 1:9-11; what room or possibility is there for the existence and exercise of a will, on the part of the creature, that is in reality free? Can the will of the creature be at one and the same time dependent in all respects on the Creator, and yet be independent in any respect of the Creator? which, if *free* in the only [81] proper sense which the word is capable of bearing, it must be. Besides, as an emanation from the will of the Creator, which confessedly it is, what can creature will do, but at the utmost reflect the features of its divine original? So clear, so transparently clear, as well as conclusive, are such arguments as these in behalf of the absolutely necessary dependence of the will of man in all respects on the will of God, and consequently of the total want of freedom or self-originating power by the former, that I have always considered and upon examination found every argument which can be adduced in favour of man's real freedom of will to be futile and sophistical. True it is that man, having been made after the divine image, must possess a will bearing some analogy or resemblance to the will of God. And hence, if *substantial* free-will be an attribute of Jehovah, *shadowy* free-will must be equally an attribute of his creature man. But when I have said shadowy free-will, I have said all. To

man himself, as by nature knowing no superior, his own will *must appear* to be free or independent of foreign influence. Were he otherwise constituted, as he could incur no moral responsibility, so neither could he possess the likeness of God. But the human will can, at the utmost, have merely to the individual himself the appearance of being free. To suppose man endowed with less than a consciousness of freedom in his thoughts and actions, or than the possession of a *shadowy free-will*, would be to maintain an hypothesis inconsistent with his having been made *after the image of God*. On the other hand, to suppose him endowed with *more*, or with *a will in reality free*, would be to confound the *shadow* with the *substance*, the will of the creature with the will of the Creator. — But, however clear and [82] convincing these principles and statements may be, it is not upon the ground of them but upon that of *divine inversion* that I propose to settle the matter.

Nature, when applied to God, signifies the *manifestation* of his perfections as distinguished from their *existence*. This point I have no intention at present to argue, but am content to assume. And doing so, it must be obvious that divine *existence* is prior in order to divine *manifestation*; or that the divine essence precedes and the divine nature follows. This being once understood and admitted, then God, essentially considered, is not dependent on what he manifests himself to be, but his manifestation of himself is dependent on what he is: which, translated into other language is equivalent to saying that his will is not dependent on his nature, but his nature on his will. God cannot lie; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; God is not the Son of man, that he should repent, Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 25:29; and God cannot do unjustly, Psalm 92:15; Rom. 9:14; Heb. 6:10; do not mean, that God in his volitions is subject to the control of his nature: but that the nature of God, or all his manifestations of himself, are regulated and controlled by what he is. He wills with perfect and absolute and resistless freedom; and dependent on this sovereign freedom of his will, that is, of himself, is his nature, or are all the manifestations of him with which his creatures can become conversant.<sup>42</sup> When, however, man is looked at, [83] a view of things the very opposite of all this presents itself. Instead of his will being superior to his nature and having it under subjection, it is his nature which regulates, controls, and domineers over his will. Now this nature of his is earthly, imperfect, and dying; standing opposed in all these respects to the heavenly, perfect, and ever-living nature of Jehovah. And man thinking and acting under the influence of the former nature, his will of course stands opposed to that will of God which thinks and acts through the medium of the latter nature. Hence, man's will clings to shadows and lying vanities, Psalm 5:9, 12:2, 62:9, Rom. 3:13, in opposition to God's will, which is constantly manifested in connexion with truth; man's will exhibits changeableness continually, Psalm 102:26, Dan. 3:19, Acts 28:6, Rom. 1:23,25, in opposition to that [84] will of God which is, like himself, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*; and the will of man can never act up perfectly even to the standard of creature righteousness, Gen. 3:1-6, Isaiah 26:10, Rom. 2:15, 3:10, 5:20, in opposition to that will of God which is always and supremely righteous. Independently, then, altogether of the conclusions which are deducible from the *shadowy* nature of the human will, it is impossible that such a will can be free. Man's will is the perfect slave of his nature, and of necessity therefore executes all its behests. As labouring under the thraldom of a nature which is earthly sensual and devilish, how can man's volitions be other than earthly sensual and devilish themselves? James 3:15. Well might the Apostle from whom I have just quoted, when referring to a will so completely enslaved by its nature as the will of man, thus express himself: — *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.* Ibid. 1:13,14. And well might a brother apostle, actuated by the same Divine Spirit, when speaking of certain apostate characters influenced by the mere principles of human nature, and of their endeavours to draw disciples aside from the path of truth, say, *While they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants, rather, slaves,<sup>43</sup> of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage.* 2 Peter 2:19.<sup>44</sup> The fact is, that of his nature man is the thrall, the bond-slave. The suggestions, the [85] despotic mandates rather, of that nature he of necessity complies with to the very letter and to the very

uttermost. And from this state of complete and galling bondage he has no more power of emancipating himself, by conferring upon himself another and a higher nature, than he has of creating a world. Nay, so far from human illumination and improvement tending towards emancipation, they are merely the exchange of the bondage of one set of human motives and principles for another, more refined no doubt, but not less despotic. By one means alone can the dis-enthralment of man from this his abject situation be effected. It is by the Son of God rendering his own divine will the will of the creature. *I am crucified with Christ*, says Paul, *nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. Gal. 2:20. The moment that this divine I, — this divine personality, — of the Lord Jesus, becomes the I or person of the creature, then, but not till then, is he *free indeed*. John 8:32,36. Not only human nature, formerly his tyrant, but even the divine nature, in so far as he is one with the divine person, is placed under his feet. That blessed *inversion* is already commenced in him, which as has just been shewn is, in reference to man and man's nature, already existing in God himself. Although man be subject to his nature, God's nature, as we have seen, is subject to God; and, therefore, by every child of God rendered a partaker of the divine nature, there is also possessed the still higher privilege of being one with the divine person; a privilege, the necessary result of which to the regenerate individual is, that whereas formerly his creature will was the slave of his creature nature, now even the divine nature is in him subject to his will as one with the will of God. Formerly [86] the slave of human nature and of it only, the Christian now consciously one with the Son of God and thereby one with God himself is, through the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit, that is through the divine nature, manifesting this his divine union. God manifests his perfect freedom of will through the operations of his divine nature; and so likewise does the child of God manifest that degree of divine freedom of will of which he is a partaker, by the degree of the operations of the divine nature, or the measure of the fruits of the Spirit, which he is rendered capable of producing. Nature formerly, while a creature, his tyrant, is, now that he is one with the Creator, his slave. And thus, not only is the freedom of the divine will opposed to, but it is also destructive of, the bondage of human will. For although the former is only begun on earth, and is enjoyed in a nature of flesh and blood, which is its bitterest and most uncompromising foe, it nevertheless exists even now, in earnest, at the expense of the destruction of human nature and human will. So far as it goes; and, when carried out to its full perfection, this will be, as a matter of course, at the expense of the complete swallowing up of human nature and human will in that will and nature which are heavenly and divine.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Fate was conceived by a large proportion of the ancient philosophers to bind even Jupiter and the other Gods themselves. And from the philosophers the doctrine travelled to the poets, (if, in reality, the reverse was not the process,) whose language, ideas, and sentiments it seems to have pervaded. So completely saturated, indeed, are the philosophy and poetry of the ancients with language implying the subjection of all beings, even the highest, to the laws of a blind and unreasoning necessity, that *fiunt omnia a fato, cuncta fato aguntur, est in fatis*, and other phrases of similar import are in them of incessant occurrence. It is true that in the writings of the poets Jupiter is occasionally represented as the source no less than the confirmier of the divine decrees. He "shakes his ambrosial locks," and thereby impresses the stamp of certainty upon his own volitions: —

*Annuit et totum nutu tremefecit Olympum.*

But this language appears to be introduced, more for the sake of the poetical imagery which it affords, than from any real conviction of the freedom and sovereignty of the divine mind in its decisions and actings. Man from time to time felt himself to be the slave of his own nature, and of the circumstances in which he was placed, (by the way, one of Mr. Robert Owen's favourite dogmas,) or, as he from a mistaken interpretation of the traditions which had come down to him from a remote age chose to conceive of it, the slave of fate; and never being able to rise in his notions of Deity above his notions of himself, he of course subjected God to the same necessity of fate or nature, or supposed him to be altogether such a being as he himself was. Psalm 50:21. It was reserved for God himself, through the illumination imparted by his own word, to shew and satisfy his church, that perfect and sovereign freedom of will, thought, and action is characteristic of his divine essence; and that, so far from being subject to his own nature, — or to fate, if the phrase be better

liked, — as man is, nature or fate on the contrary is subject to him, being merely the expression or manifestation of what he himself is and of what he himself chooses shall be.

<sup>43</sup> Δούλοι.

<sup>44</sup> Briefly expressed, the opposite states of human and divine will are the following: —

Man's will. . . . inferior to human nature.

God's will. . . . superior to divine nature.

<sup>45</sup> One of the cleverest and most ingenious, although certainly not one of the largest or most celebrated works, in support of the doctrine of the entire freedom of the human will, which it has been my lot to peruse, is that of G. F. Bockshammer, a young German divine, translated into English and enriched with notes, by Kaufman of the Theological Seminary, Andover, United States. But it requires not the acumen of an Edwards, or to have mastered his profoundly metaphysical treatise on the subject in question, to detect Bockshammer's fallacies. Every person taught from scripture the distinction between soul and spirit, and enabled to bear in mind the fact that the former, as creaturely and shadowy, must be in all respects under the control of and subservient to the latter as divine and substantial, is perfectly competent to the task.

[87]

## SECTION IX.

### THIRD SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

#### THE WIDE GATE AND THE STRAIT GATE.

OUR blessed Lord is reported by the Evangelist Matthew thus to have expressed himself: — *Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereto: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Matt. 7:13,14.

Concerning the literal meaning and immediate reference of these words, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. The Lord Jesus was on the eve of setting up his New Testament kingdom, — that kingdom, the establishment of which Moses and the prophets had for so many centuries foretold. Into it, those whom he here addresses, descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, are exhorted to enter. Nay, not merely to enter, but to strive or *agonize* to enter.<sup>46</sup> From the place where they then stood, the situation which they then occupied, two roads are represented as proceeding: the one which, with wide portals and broad in itself, invited and welcomed the entrance of the multitude; the other, strait in its opening and narrow in its progress, seeming to repel all attempts at admission. It is into the latter, difficult and uninviting as it was, that [88] the hearers of the Son of God are exhorted to force their way. For although setting out from the same point, so completely did the two roads diverge the one from the other, and so completely opposite were the directions to which they respectively tended, that the one which was broad and attractive to the multitude terminated in destruction; while the other, which was narrow and pursued by few, conducted to life everlasting. Could our Lord have more forcibly delineated than by this metaphorical language the conduct and fate of the Jewish people, as contrasted with the faith and ultimate salvation of his few disciples? The great majority of Abraham's fleshly descendants, to whom he came, not only crucified him, but rejected his message of mercy and love when proclaimed to them by his apostles; preferring to enter by the wide gate of unbelief upon that broad way of systematic, persevering, and uncompromising hostility to him and his claims, which was destined speedily to conduct them to the forfeiture of all their Old Testament privileges, and the complete destruction of themselves as the earthly church of the living God. To a few, Jesus, having revealed himself as *the way*, John 14:6; *the door*, Ibid. 10:7,9; and *the gate*, Matt. 7:13, with Ephes. 2:18, granted admission thereby into the knowledge of God here, and the enjoyment of him in his kingdom hereafter; introducing them, through himself as *the strait gate*, into that *narrow way* of faith

which alone could conduct them to the spiritual and heavenly privileges of the true Israel of God. Natural and divine things are again, in this way, made to appear in marked and complete contrast the one with the other. Man, in the persons of the Jews, adopted a course of conduct which, beginning in opposition to [89] God, led further and further away from him, until at last it terminated in destruction; God, on the contrary, pointed out to his *little flock* of disciples a way, nay actually placed them in *the way*, which, being agreeable to him, in due time conducted them to glory and immortality.

<sup>46</sup> See the parallel passage, Luke 13:24, in the Greek. Αγωνίζεσθε, *Force your entrance through*. Campbell.

But although having originally a reference to the opposite lines of conduct to be pursued respectively by the majority of the Jewish people on the one hand, and the small band of his disciples on the other; and to the opposite results to which the unbelief of the one, and the faith of the other, should respectively lead; we should be doing grievous injustice to our blessed Lord's words were we to limit them exclusively to this meaning. Like every other statement which flowed from his lips, they involve in them a principle of general application. They serve to indicate a most important circumstance, by which those possessed merely of human nature should be distinguished from those endowed with the earnest of the divine nature, till the end of time.

The circumstance alluded to is, that an adherence to false views of religion should ever be characteristic of the multitude; while the knowledge of true and spiritual religion should ever be confined to a few.

Of all the doctrines contained in scripture, I know none which more directly assails fleshly mind, none which is more provoking to it, than that of absolute and unconditional election on the part of God. It galled and nettled the people of Nazareth, when proclaimed to them by Christ himself; Luke 4:23-29; it always roused the rage and enmity of the Jewish people, when touched on by the apostles; Acts 7, *throughout*; 13:46-51; 14:19; 17:5; 18:5,6; 22:21-23; and at the present [90] day, the most unqualified hatred of it enters as an ingredient into all Pelagian, Socinian, and moderate Calvinist, in a word all *fleshly*, systems of religion with which I am acquainted.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> John Locke, the Rationalist, in hatred of this scriptural doctrine is at one with John Wesley, the Enthusiast. Extremes meet.

And yet, the introduction of a sovereignly chosen few into the possession and enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom may be said with truth to be the favourite doctrine of God himself. It is the groundwork of scripture. It enters into almost every type, every narrative, every prophecy. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is full of it. And the inspired writers of the Epistles seem absolutely to glory in it. Rom. 8:28-39; 9:6-29; 11:1-10; &c. &c. &c. When Moses, in the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy, has occasion to speak of the Lord having *chosen Israel to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*, he addresses his countrymen in these remarkable words: *The Lord did not set his love upon you nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.* Deut. 7:6-8. The intention of God, in causing this language to be recorded, is evidently to shew us the principles on which, and the manner in which, he brings to the knowledge of himself, and thereby to the enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom, the members of that true, internal, and spiritual church of which Abraham's fleshly descendants were [91] merely the grand and impressive type. They are chosen absolutely, without any reference whatever to what they are in themselves by nature; and their number is very small as compared with that of *a world that lieth in wickedness*. This, however, is not merely matter of inference. It is likewise expressly declared. *Whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* Moreover,

*whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Rom. 8:29,30. *Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.* 1 Peter 2:2. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Luke 12:32. *Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.* Rom. 9:29, quoted from Isaiah 1:9. *Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Rom. 11:5. The rest of the human family, excepting the few thus sovereignly chosen to be heirs of the heavenly kingdom, God passes by, leaving them to live and die possessed merely of the principles of human nature; and therefore destitute of the earnest of that principle of life everlasting, the possession of which alone qualifies for reigning with the Son of God.

Most offensive to human nature is all this. It is to bring God and man, indeed, into direct and deadly collision. "The religion of Christ has so spread, and is so spreading," says fleshly mind, "that it will ultimately be embraced upon earth by the whole, or at all events by a vast majority of the human race." — "No," says God [92] himself; "what you consider to be the religion of Christ is merely one of the phases of the religion of fleshly conscience: the religion of Christ in reality, or divine views and a divine enjoyment of his revealed character, as it has never been my practise, so is it never my intention, to bestow during the existence of this present world except upon a very small minority of Adam's descendants. The gate which is so wide as to admit multitudes, and the way which is so broad as to permit them with ease to walk therein, never can lead to any other issue than destruction: it being the strait gate and the narrow way of the divine nature, into which I introduce my selected few alone, that stand connected with life everlasting." No two statements, surely, can be conceived more opposite or more decidedly conflicting than these.

Annoyed at a representation of matters so directly opposed to its own, fleshly mind is ready to exclaim: —

"Surely the introduction of the whole, or of the great majority of the human race, into the knowledge and enjoyment of God upon earth, would be more glorifying to God as well as more advantageous to themselves, than to confine spiritual privileges during the currency of time to a few. Besides, the language of prophecy, literally and strictly interpreted, seems to point towards such a consummation being realized even in this present world. But even supposing the evidence of prophecy in favour of the doctrine less full and satisfying than it is, can those, think you, who are eager to promote the improvement of their fellow-men, and deeply interested in their welfare, listen for a single moment to such a libel on the divine character as that to which you have just chosen to give utterance? Scripture itself must be untrue, and must fall to [93] be rejected, if it lay down principles calculated to foster and support a notion so contradictory to all that reason dictates, and that natural feeling tends so powerfully to confirm."

Stop, my friends. The greater part of this reasoning is protested against as fallacious *in limine*. It proceeds upon the principle of constituting man the judge of what it is fitting that God should do and should not do. But has this principle any value?<sup>48</sup> With what creatures did the Almighty and the All-wise take counsel, before calling the universe into existence? Isa. 40:13; Rom. 11:34. And who is competent, independently of a revelation from God himself, to say what it is incumbent upon him to perform? Why a single divine statement, a single divine hint even, blows to atoms in a moment every human argument founded on what man is pleased to assume as to the proprieties of the divine conduct. Indeed, the very fact of any argument on the subject of religion being agreeable to the dictates of mere fleshly mind, is of itself enough to render it suspicious to him who is taught from above: God's ways not being as man's ways, nor God's [94] thoughts as man's thoughts. Isa. 55:8,9. As to the language of prophecy appearing, when construed literally, to justify conclusions favourable to the salvation while in flesh of the whole or of a majority of the human race, it may be so. I will not argue the matter. This,

however, I know, that the Jews of our Lord's time reasoned and acted on this principle, and found themselves grossly and most awfully mistaken. They interpreted, and considered themselves justified in interpreting, prophecies expressive of the everlasting existence and triumphs of Abraham's and Israel's descendants, to signify the everlasting existence and triumphs of themselves, as a nation of this world. They therefore *crucified the Lord of glory*, persecuted his disciples, and rejected his gospel. The event shewed that, in spite of their miraculous existence and miraculous circumstances, they had egregiously blundered: their mistake having consisted in a *literal* interpretation of prophecy, and therefore in an ascription to themselves, a mere fleshly church and nation of this world, of privileges which in reality appertain to a spiritual church having its seat and residence in heaven. Is there afforded by this no ground for suspicion that a similar mistake may have been committed, when the *literal* meaning of prophecy is pressed upon us as a reason for admitting the salvation of multitudes, or of all mankind, at some future period during the continuance of their fleshly state? Besides, remember that such a *literal* interpretation of prophecy stands opposed to divine declarations, fortified by divine examples, of the number of the saved upon earth being extremely small. Rom. 11:5, 1 Peter 3:20,21.

<sup>48</sup> Has any one of my readers a wish to see the argument which would, from what seems most fit to human reason, deduce God's actual procedure, thoroughly exposed and turned into ridicule? Let him, in that case, consult William Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation," pp. 141-143, London edition, 1836. — By the way, I am far from wishing to be understood from this as acquiescing in the whole of Chillingworth's statements and reasonings. His work is a magnificent specimen of practical logic, and is, in so far as Papists are concerned, unanswered and unanswerable. Occasionally, however, it indicates too strongly a Socinian bias to be altogether agreeable to those whose minds have been enlightened from above. And to myself, I confess, there appeared throughout such a constant assumption of the principle of human mind being qualified, by its own natural powers and faculties, to comprehend the true meaning of scripture, as in no small degree to detract from the delight and satisfaction which otherwise I could not help experiencing in the perusal of it.

To try God's plans and procedure by man's notions of what they should be, appears, when looked at upon [95] scriptural principles and in the light of the doctrine of divine inversion, to be in the highest degree preposterous; seeing that they are always and necessarily the very reverse of what man by his natural faculties is capable of imagining. Our present subject furnishes us with the most ample and overwhelming evidences of this.

1. In believing and anticipating the future salvation of the great majority of the human race upon earth, men contemplate a mere earthly object, viz., the supposed future increase of the comfort and happiness of their fellow men here below. But none of God's purposes are earthly. They are heavenly, and heavenly only. In making known the everlasting gospel, what he aims at is not the improvement and well-being of man in flesh. This he leaves to human beings themselves, as a matter entirely within the scope of their own abilities, and capable of being accomplished by mere creature expedients. Besides, man in flesh is the subject of divine condemnation, not of divine approval. God's aim is to make all persons and things new, through his own Son: not in flesh, but in another and a higher state of existence. To suppose, then, that the world in loving its own, and that worldly men in attempting to promote the temporal comfort and interests of one another, — which every prospect of, and every attempt to bring about, a millennium in flesh implies, — are aiming at God's end or object, (an end or object the realization of which involves in it the passing away and destruction of time, flesh, and fleshly mind altogether,) is a mistake of the grossest and most absurd description. And yet, this mistake is committed by every one who confounds that advancement and improvement of mere fleshly nature upon earth, which there can be little doubt is [96] destined to take place at some future period of this present world, with that new creation of the church and of mankind in general in Christ Jesus, which shall only be carried into effect in *the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein dwell righteousness.*

2. It is fancied, "that God would confer a temporal benefit upon mankind, by saving upon earth the

whole or the greater proportion of them." This is a sad mistake. Human enjoyments can only be relished, and human affairs can only be carried on, under the influence of human motives, passions, and principles. A circumstance which has its origin in that species of consistency which obtains among all human principles; or from its being only human principles of one kind that are adapted to, and are qualified to harmonize with, human principles of any other kind. Divine principles, on the contrary, are inconsistent with, in consequence of their being diametrically opposed to such as are human. To attempt to reconcile the two sets of principles is therefore impossible. They necessarily jar together. This every one is made to experience, whose privilege it has been to become a partaker of divine principles, and in proportion as he does partake of them. *Flesh in him lusteth against spirit, and spirit against flesh: these being contrary the one to the other.* Gal. 5:17. See, also, Rom. 7:14-23. His relish for earthly pleasures and enjoyments is, through his possession of the earnest of divine mind, sadly spoiled; and his disposition to embark heart and soul in human intrigues and pursuits, sadly interfered with. Does not this suggest some little idea of the mischiefs and confusion which would inevitably follow, were all human beings while in flesh to become partakers of the earnest of the divine nature? Were all [97] like-minded with the few who are members of the church of the living God, how could the affairs of this present world he carried on? These absolutely depend on men being stimulated to make exertions under the influence of human motives, and with a view to the acquisition of human advantages. This could not be, if all or the great majority were possessed of and actuated by divine principles. Human enjoyments no longer proving attractive, human pursuits and thereby human society would under such circumstances be brought completely to a stand-still. Taking these obvious and necessary consequences of the establishment of a millennium in flesh into account, who sees not that human beings and human affairs, instead of being benefited as to this world by the universal diffusion and possession of the mind of God, would be brought thereby into a state of utter and inextricable confusion? Over and above which, mankind, in such an imaginary state of things, would cease to answer the grand purpose for which God has called them into existence: which is, to go on shewing more and more what their nature is; and what they are as well as what they are not capable of effecting. Admirably, therefore, no less than wisely, does our heavenly Father, in the case of the great majority of mankind, leave human nature to itself, and permit it to display and develop more and more its own distinctive features till the end of time: not spoiling man for natural and earthly purposes, as ordinary millennialists suppose, by bestowing upon all or the great majority of human beings while in flesh, the earnest of the divine nature; but only taking out from among the human race a small, foreordained, and specially elected people; enough to maintain the controversy which was begun in paradise between [98] the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, but not so numerous as in any perceptible and inconvenient degree to interfere with the pursuits, enjoyments, and ultimate tendencies of the nature and mind of flesh.

3. The notion of all or the greater part of mankind ultimately, while upon earth, knowing the gospel, is inconsistent with God's purpose of manifesting during this time state that salvation is his gift — that it is the offspring of free sovereign grace. Benefits which are common to all, such as light and air, are not only apt to be lightly esteemed, but to be regarded as something to which all have a right and can prefer a claim. Now this is not the case with the knowledge of God as possessed by human beings in flesh. Adam's descendants, as such, have no right whatever to it. It is God's to bestow sovereignly, whosoever and upon whomsoever he pleaseth. And which is the better way of evincing its sovereignty? To bestow it upon many or upon few? To make all human beings, or a small portion of them its recipients? Certainly, among those who admit the freeness of divine grace, there can be no doubt or hesitation about the answer. Constituted as the human mind is, and accustomed to attach importance to things according to their rarity, eternal life, if bestowed indiscriminately and universally upon human beings while in flesh, — were such a thing possible, — would not only sink in value, but lose altogether its distinctive character as the gift of God. It would come to be regarded as man's right.

Or, at all events, as that to which man could entitle himself by the performance of some easy conditions. And striking it is to observe, that all who are sticklers for the universal spread of the knowledge of God upon earth, and anticipate a millennium to be realized in [99] flesh, are seldom or never found to contend, even in words, for the sovereignty of divine grace: their views of salvation being always in one way or another conditional, or implying desert of some kind or other on the part of the creature; and even professing Calvinists who hold the doctrine in question, when their sentiments are enquired into, being found to maintain, that *unless we accept of an offered Christ, or embrace his salvation by faith, or perform some other act*, either with or without divine assistance, we cannot be saved. It is by saving few of mankind while in flesh that God principally makes known to human beings, or rather keeps under the notice of his church, the fact of the enjoyment of eternal life by any upon earth being his gift and the result of grace alone.

Every other objection which can be advanced against the comparative smallness of the number of those who shall know God during the subsistence of this time state involves in it the same ignorance of divine truth, and falls to be answered and disposed of exactly on the same principles.

"Why should God love a few and not all? Or what is there in one to attract his notice, which is not to be found in all?"

Observe, we are now speaking only of God's treatment of human beings while in flesh. For when we advance we shall discover that *all human beings*, as one with God in his *all in all* character and thereby rendered *partakers of the divine nature*, are dealt with on principles of a very different description from those which we are now considering. Bearing this in mind, the answer to the objection is easy and obvious. God cherishes love *towards no human being as such*. Mankind, viewed in their [100] Adamic or flesh-and-blood character, are unworthy of divine attachment — are, indeed, objects of the divine displeasure. To them, thus considered, as the suitable wages of sin God awards death. It is as one with his own Son glorified, and as partakers of his resurrection mind and nature, and not as Adam's descendants, that God loves during their abode in flesh the members of his church. They were one with the risen Jesus in the divine purpose, that is in reality, before time began. Hence eternal life in its earnest comes to them not as human beings, but as one with the Son of God in his mediatorial character even while they are sojourners here below. The rest of the human family, being destitute of this special connexion with the Lord Jesus, remain destitute of the privilege of knowing and enjoying him while in flesh. Perhaps I should express myself more correctly as well as render my answers more explicit were I to say that God, so far from loving human nature and any human being as such, or from finding any thing in man to attract his notice as the objection supposes, actually and absolutely loathes and abhors human nature; and has given the most decided manifestation of his dislike to it, by bringing it to an end and destroying it in the cross of Christ Jesus. That which attracts God's special love towards any of the human family is not any circumstance whereby that individual as a man differs from his fellow men, but the fact of the individual's special and everlasting union with God's own well-beloved Son. God loves his own nature as possessed by Christ and the church, and not in any respect whatever the nature of man; and this for the simple reason, that God can only love that which is deserving of his love.

Foiled at this point, the fleshly-minded objector again [101] returns to the charge. "But why may not I know what any other human being can know? It is unjust in God to withhold from me what he concedes to another, circumstanced exactly as I am." To this objection, the answer of the apostle to a cavil of a similar kind is singularly appropriate: *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* Rom. 9:20. Keeping this language of the apostle in view, indeed assuming the principle which it involves as the basis of our observations, the objection above stated may be taken to pieces, and each part of it easily disposed of. — 1. One taught from above while in flesh does not know Christ directly *by being a man*. On the contrary, he knows Christ in consequence of his being made *a partaker of the divine nature*, or

of there being already conferred upon him *the earnest of a new creation in the risen Son of God*. What naturally any one human being as such may know, unquestionably any other human being, if endowed with the requisite talents, disposed to put forth the requisite energy, and possessed of the requisite leisure, may know likewise. But to know Christ is not a human science or theory. It is not a principle to the attainment of which the faculties of human nature in any one are competent. Whosoever knows Jesus in his heavenly and divine character, that is knows him in reality, does so by having had the earnest of the divine nature superinduced upon his mind; by having been elevated into a region into which human ability and human industry, however great, can never soar. No human being as such, then, having the power or capacity of knowing what is divine, the first part of the objection, as a matter of course, falls [102] to the ground. In understanding the gospel I am given to know what no human being, considered merely as a human being, can know. — 2. Unquestionably, it would be unjust in God to withhold from any human being what he had pledged himself, either expressly or even virtually, to bestow upon that being. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do that which is right?* Gen. 18:25. But where, either in the scriptures or in the constitution of human nature, has God pledged himself to bestow the earnest of eternal life upon mankind indiscriminately while in flesh? Whenever God actually does bestow this earnest, the individual upon whom it is bestowed knows that he possesses it. And from the circumstance of the actual possession of it he knows that this privilege was destined for him before time began: all God's purposes being like himself unchangeable. *Having had ears given him to hear, he does hear.* Matt. 13:9. But independently of the actual enjoyment of the gift of the knowledge of God by the members of the church; and independently of the conviction which this always and necessarily carries along with it of God in their case having fulfilled an eternally self-imposed obligation; Rom. 8:29,30; where and how can God be shewn to have brought himself under any pledge or obligation to bestow spiritual privileges during his time state of existence upon any one?

God, it is at once and cheerfully admitted, in bestowing any particular nature upon a creature, comes under an obligation, self-imposed, to deal with that creature agreeably to the nature which he has bestowed. And so he does. Having conferred their respective natures upon the inferior animals, he deals with them according to those natures. Having conferred upon man his superior nature, he deals with him according to that nature. Neither the [103] one nor the other can with truth and justice turn upon God and say, that his treatment of them has been in any respect whatever inconsistent with their natures, or with the situation and circumstances in which he hath seen meet to place them. God, however, came under no obligation, in creating the various orders of animated beings, to bestow, either upon the inferior animals or upon mankind in general while in flesh, any nature or the earnest of any nature superior to that which originally he chose to bestow. Hence no creature, whether brutal or human, can justly complain of God for not bestowing upon it a nature, and not elevating it to a rank, superior to those with which as it came at first from God's hands it was endowed. As no beast is entitled to bring a charge of partiality against God for not having created it a man, or for not subsequently elevating it to the rank of man, so no more has any man a right to bring a similar charge against God for not having created him originally a partaker of the divine nature, or for not subsequently conferring upon him that nature while he is a sojourner in flesh. He has no right, adopting the language put into the mouth of his objector by the Apostle, to say to God, *Why hast thou made me thus?* Being perfectly passive in the hands of him who fashions the various orders of his creatures, and man among the rest, with a reference to the purposes to which he is rendering them subservient, man has no more right (indeed, properly speaking, a less right,) to challenge his Maker for the nature which he hath seen meet to assign to him, than would be possessed by clay, supposing it endowed with intelligence, to arraign the absolutely uncontrolled and unquestionable procedure of an earthly potter. — Can I render my meaning still more plain? God always deals with man as what he is, or [104] agreeably to the nature which he hath bestowed upon him; and this is all that man has a right to demand or expect at God's hands. Shall we all agree in denying to the inferior animals a right to turn upon God, and challenge him

for bestowing upon them merely the bestial nature? and shall not even the natural consciences of men, when properly appealed to and made to speak out, upon the very same principles which are applicable to the brutes enforce the absurdity as well as criminality of human beings turning upon God, and challenging him for not giving them while in flesh any higher nature than that of man? — the nature which it seemed good to him originally to bestow upon them. God, let it never be forgotten, is the absolute Sovereign. He is the potter, and his creatures are but as clay in his hands. If he shall see meet to bestow an inferior nature upon the cat, the dog, or the horse, has any of these animals a right to complain that it has not been created a man? If he shall bestow only human nature upon the great majority of mankind while in flesh, has the majority of mankind a right to complain that they are not made partakers of the divine nature? They have the nature which God originally gave them; they are dealt with according to that nature; and there has been no violation on God's part of any pledge to bestow upon them a higher nature while here below: with what part of the divine procedure towards them, then, can they justly find fault? — Sovereignty combined with wisdom is manifest in all that God does. Sovereignty made the inferior animals what they are. Sovereignty made human beings what they are. And sovereignty commences the new creation of certain human beings, even while in flesh, by bestowing upon them the earnest of the divine nature. [105] There is thus a progression in creation, of the nature of a climax, from the creation of intelligence in its lowest form, up to the highest form in which it is capable of existing and appearing in connexion with this present state of things. In every one of the cases stated, however, it is sovereignty which confers the respective natures. Previously to having had conferred upon it the brutal nature, except in so far as the divine purpose was concerned the brute had no right to it. Previously to having had conferred upon him human nature, except with the same proviso man had no right to it. And just so, previously to having had conferred upon them the earnest of the divine nature, except with the same proviso the recipients of that blessed privilege had no right and could prefer no claim to it. This part of the objection, therefore, has its origin in ignorance of God's character as a sovereign; as well as in ignorance of the fact, that although justice requires that every creature shall be dealt with by the Creator in a manner suitable to the nature which he may have seen meet to bestow upon it, yet justice does not require that he should bestow upon any of his creatures while in flesh a higher nature than that with which they are originally endowed. But God besides being just is also sovereign. And for God to new-create any intelligent being while in flesh is for him, in the exercise of the same sovereignty whereby at first he summoned the various orders of created intelligences from the very lowest up to man into existence, assigning to them respectively, without the possibility of dispute or challenge, the different natures and capacities which they possess, — to shew, that there is a still higher form in which creative energy may be put forth even during this earthly state, viz.: in conferring upon a [106] few, who have no more right to it before being bestowed than other beings have to their respective natures, the earnest of the divine nature.

By this time it must be apparent, even to the most unreflecting of my readers, that the views which I have adopted regarding the spread of Christianity in the world, stand diametrically opposed to those of Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Church Extension Associations, and other bodies of a similar kind. And this, just because God's representations of the matter stand opposed to the notions entertained by man. By man it is imagined, that if not now, at all events at some future period of this present world, wide shall be the gate and broad the way which lead to life everlasting, and that many shall walk therein. By God, on the contrary, it is affirmed, that while time lasts the gate of eternal life shall be strait and the way narrow, there being but few who shall enter thereat. Now, which of these two representations is the more worthy of credit? — I support Bible Societies. And I throw no obstacle or impediment in the way of other religious associations. They are, I am satisfied, fulfilling God's purposes. Through their instrumentality, as well as by means of the exertions of those who are actively and zealously engaged in proclaiming a spurious gospel, I have little doubt that God is intending to bring many of his elect people to the knowledge of the truth. Not many in comparison of those who are

confirmed and hardened in fleshly notions of religion by the false and unscriptural theology inculcated by such societies and preachers; but many in comparison of the whole number of those who upon earth are destined to receive the earnest of the divine nature. And further, not directly by means of what such societies and teachers aim [107] at and proclaim, but by God rendering them,, in spite of themselves and of the erroneous doctrines which they assist in disseminating and confirming, the means of leading on others, in fulfilment of God's purpose, to the possession of privileges which they themselves are never to attain to. To be thus instrumental in bringing to the enjoyment of salvation a small elected number, to the exclusion of themselves, is not of course the object of fleshly-minded professors of Christianity. The whole world they profess themselves eager to grasp in their wide embrace.<sup>49</sup> The whole world they would fain have, could their pretended wishes be gratified, to know and accept of what they call the gospel. — And in this, taking into account the many valuable temporal results of which their labours are productive, — their views and objects must ever appear, to those who are like-minded with themselves to be more benevolent than mine. I am content, however, to prefer the benevolence of God to the benevolence of man. And as God has declared it to be his intention to take only a small elect number out of the world to know his name while time lasts, I am satisfied, from the very circumstance of this being the divine purpose, that it must be true benevolence. In consequence of which, I desire to avoid parading any pretended benevolence of mine, having for its object the salvation of all while in flesh, in opposition to God's real benevolence which destines the knowledge and enjoyment of salvation only to a few while here below. — But, perhaps, I am met with the statement, "You mistake us; we do not anticipate the salvation of all: only, we conceive ourselves bound to desire the salvation of all, and to act and labour as if that object were attainable." What! Is the [108] whole scheme of salvation revealed in the Scriptures a mere scheme of delusion, in which either God deceives us, or authorises us to deceive ourselves, by proposing as objects to be aimed at sheer impossibilities? Besides, does a suspicion never suggest itself, especially to those who profess to hold the doctrine of sovereign and unconditional election, of the spurious as well as arrogant and presumptuous character of that benevolence, which assumes to love mankind otherwise and better than God himself does? This, be it observed, is the import of the statement in question. As pretending that, if the wishes of Christians were to be consulted and gratified in the matter, all men should know and enjoy God upon earth; and yet representing themselves as convinced that this object of their wishes can never be realized; the persons who cherish such feelings are to appearance amiably, but not on that account the less arrogantly and hypocritically, ascribing to themselves a benevolence greater than that of God. Man more benevolent than his Maker! Out upon such an idea. Alas, however, it is no mere imaginary principle of action. Its existence and operation are implied in all those secular Establishments, whether Catholic or Protestant, which pretend to identify nations of this world with the members of the spiritual church of Christ; and it is implied, likewise, in all those schemes of religion which aim at rendering Christianity popular and universal upon earth. — True Christianity cannot be so degraded. It confines itself, during the existence of this time state, to the hearts and consciences of the election of God alone. And yet, blessed be God! thereby is the way prepared for carrying schemes of infinite benevolence in a higher state of existence into full effect. — This limitation of the church, while [109] in flesh, men ignorant of God cannot bear. Like Peter when under the influence of strong fleshly affection, such persons are ready to say of a small and restricted body of regenerate individuals upon earth, "*That be far from thee, Lord.* Matt. 16:22. Let thy name be known by all during the period of their abode in flesh, as the only means by which the nature and extent of thy divine benevolence to the children of men can be displayed." — "*Get thee behind me, enemy; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men,*" Ibid. 23, is the rebuff which every supporter of fleshly schemes of religious benevolence, in opposition to the true scheme of heavenly benevolence concocted and developed by God himself, is destined to encounter at God's hands.

<sup>49</sup> *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.* John 15:19.

As an incontrovertible general principle then it may be laid down that every scheme of religion, whether theoretical or reduced to practice, which contemplates the salvation of great multitudes of human beings or of the whole human race in flesh, is *ipso facto* proved to be inconsistent with and opposed to the spiritual character of the religion of Christ Jesus. Human popularity, arising from what is commonly called preaching the gospel — large congregations of professed followers of Christ — numerous associated bodies declaring themselves to be actuated by a peculiarly ardent love to the Redeemer, and desire to promote his cause — and above all Established Churches — are not merely objects of suspicion, but are by the very necessity of the case the open and determined enemies of Him who sitteth and reigneth, not upon an earthly throne, but in the Heavenly Zion. They are either the result of a direct appeal to human and fleshly principles, as is [110] obvious when we consider the foundation and structure of the Romish, Greek, and Protestant Established Churches; or of a very large admixture of human views and errors with the language of inspiration, as is obvious in the dogmas proclaimed by popular preachers and acquiesced in by popular congregations whether in connexion with the Establishments or among Dissenters. Indeed, whatever may be the amount of scriptural phraseology employed or of scriptural ideas presented by popular divines, when the tenor of their discourses is analysed and the character of their congregations examined into by persons divinely taught and on that ground alone competent to the investigation, it will invariably be found that it is not the divine truths from time to time uttered by them, but the large accompaniment of erroneous exposition and unscriptural enforcement, and the human usages in which they indulge or to which they conform, that recommend them to the notice and favour of the multitude. Human passions are roused, human feelings are appealed to and flattered, human intellect is gratified, while the eye, the ear, and the other senses are tickled; and as the preacher declares that thus to recommend himself is to recommend the gospel, and as the ignorant hearers brought completely under his influence know no better, the whole, although mere stage-trick and a proof of the power which man under false pretences may exercise over his fellow-men, passes current as an admirably devised expedient for the spread and furtherance of vital godliness. No doubt popular preachers do good. Aye, much good. Many individuals are by them reclaimed from vicious courses; many are by their instrumentality subjected to the influence of strong and abiding seriousness of fleshly religious principles; and the standard [111] of morals is generally in places which are the scenes of their talents and operations considerably elevated. They constitute the cheapest and most effective because preventive police, which any human government can employ or encourage. Society is thus made materially to benefit by their labours. And God forbid that any obstruction should be thrown in their way by those who know the truth. Besides, popular congregations become occasionally the nurseries of the heavenly and spiritual church: glorious truths in the language of scripture issuing constantly from the lips of those who, like Balaam's ass, utter what they themselves do not understand; and individuals here and there being, by means of these, from time to time brought out of the darkness of nature into the light and liberty of the everlasting gospel. Still, however, human popularity in matters of religion is in itself fleshly; being the result of fleshly principles and expedients, and succeeding in the production of fleshly results. It invariably indicates the possession of human ability, human learning, human eloquence, and human tact; it maintains itself by the varied and entertaining inculcation of tenets which are agreeable to the human mind, and by powerful appeals to human affections; and it labours hard, in opposition to God's express declarations to the contrary, to make large multitudes of human beings members of the Church of the living God. I beg pardon: it labours hard to make such multitudes members of churches, which certainly are not *the Church of the living God*. It labours hard to set up *fleshly churches* in opposition to his *one true spiritual church*. Such is human popularity on religious grounds, and such are the objects which it contemplates. But why select it particularly for assault? It is merely [112] part and parcel of a system which seriously, and deliberately, and religiously aims at making God a liar, by shewing that, so far from the gate being strait and the way narrow as God declares it to be, the gate on the contrary is wide and the way broad which conducts human beings while in flesh to life everlasting.

Small must that congregation be where the truth of God is proclaimed, received, and relished in its native simplicity: if, indeed, such a congregation or external assemblage of individuals can exist at all. As in itself pure, internal, and heavenly, it is doubtful with me if the true Church of God be capable of having any external representative upon earth. Any other, at all events, than that typical church, the Israel of old, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. *Representative* is here, by the way, an incorrect phrase. If any number of spiritually enlightened individuals can assemble upon earth, they do so, not as a *symbol* of the true church, but as a *portion* of it. One thing I am sure of, that if individuals taught from above can meet together outwardly at all, their number can never be very great. And this, because the fact of there being very few new-created ones existing upon earth at any given time forbids the possibility of their ever constituting in any place a large external body.

Here let me guard myself against misrepresentation or mistake. When I say, that popularity on religious grounds of itself affords evidence of false doctrines being held and proclaimed, I am far from intending to assert that the converse of this proposition holds true. Want of popularity does not of itself evince, nay it scarcely even warrants a suspicion, that the gospel is known and proclaimed. The reason of this lies on the surface. Want [113] of popularity may spring from ten thousand different causes, all of them as decidedly human and fleshly as that very popularity, of which it is generally so envious. It may be the result of defective abilities, or defective learning, or defective tact. It may be the result of negligence, or of curiosity being sated and finding new sources of gratification. It may be the effect of advancing life, or of infirmities accidentally induced. It may spring from the human passions and feelings which always and obviously mix with the motives of those who set up and support religious associations. It may be the result of the unfashionable nature of dissent. Or it may have its origin in the circumstance of preachers not understanding, and thereby not being able properly to address themselves to and touch the springs of the different principles, passions, and propensities of our fleshly nature. Defective popularity arising from this last cause is particularly remarkable in Arian and Socinian communities. Their teachers are too exclusively intellectual in the mode of stating and exhibiting their religious notions, such as they are. They either do not understand that there is a principle of fleshly conscience distinct from and superior to that of fleshly intellect,<sup>50</sup> confining therefore their addresses to the inferior principle of intellect alone; or, recognising [114] the superiority of conscience over intellect they shew themselves ignorant of the proper way of operating upon the former, by attempting to deal with it after a purely intellectual fashion. Hence the coldness of their worship, and the absolute impossibility while they thus continue to act of their ever becoming popular. Were Arian and Socinian teachers of religion but to condescend to take a lesson from some of those sects, who, although they are the objects of their affected contempt, are nevertheless in possession of the key to fleshly conscience; were they but to study the various tricky expedients by which that highest of the natural faculties of man may be roused, dealt with, and influenced; and were they, with the splendid abilities by which many of them are distinguished, but to set about reducing to practice the lessons thus learned; they might in due time become as popular, as great proficients in fascinating and cajoling the multitude, as any other body of fleshly religionists. — Want of popularity, then, of itself affords no evidence that the gospel is known and proclaimed. Want of popularity, however, will always, from the very necessity of the case, characterise the knowledge, love, and outward profession of the genuine gospel; rendering it more than suspicious, in fact matter of certainty, that popularity on religious grounds can only consist with the exhibition of mixed, spurious, and unscriptural views of Christianity.

<sup>50</sup> The three great principles of human nature are sensation, intellect, and conscience; or, to vary the phraseology, are the appetitive, the reasoning, and the religious principles. In this order, also, they stand and are developed. Sensation, or the lowest, appears first; intellect, or the intermediate, second; and conscience, or the highest, last. The three temptations of our Lord, and the order in which they were presented, illustrate this position of mine, — although the subject can only be properly understood by those to whom in the light

of scripture it has been opened up. See a *catalogue raisonnée* of these same three great principles of human nature, in the same order, given in 1 John 2:16.

Am I understood? While in flesh, according to the religious notions of the mere human mind, the great majority of mankind may become, nay shall become, members of Christ's true church and heirs of his heavenly kingdom. While in flesh, according to the views suggested by divine mind, a very small number of human [115] beings, comparatively speaking, shall become partakers of the earnest of the divine nature and be introduced into glory. Thus, as in the other cases which we have been considering, flesh opposes spirit and spirit opposes flesh. Fleshly mind from love to itself and to its own, and magnifying its own benevolence of temper and disposition even at the expense of the benevolence of Deity, adopts the former view, and sets vigorously about helping God to carry it into effect. Spiritual mind, understanding somewhat of the import of the eight souls saved in Noah's ark, of the two who escaped the destruction of the Israelites in the wilderness, and of the affecting query of the prophet, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* Isaiah 53:1, acquiesces in the divine arrangement of the salvation, while in flesh, of an election of grace, — satisfied that in this way true benevolence no less than true wisdom is displayed. Spiritual mind no doubt perceives, as we shall afterwards have occasion to shew, that the election of the heavenly church is *expansive*, not *contractive* as was that of the earthly church. Nevertheless it perceives in time the election, absolute and sovereign, of a few, to the complete exclusion of all others. Rom. 8:29,30; 11:5. In short, to man's mind, the gate of eternal life is wide and the way broad; to God's mind, the gate is strait and the way narrow.

An anecdote illustrative of my meaning in what goes before, for the genuineness of which I can vouch, may appropriately enough conclude this section.

About twenty-three or twenty-four years since, a raw, inexperienced, and simple-minded young man was preparing for the ministry in one of the churches, as they are called, established by law in this country. Having been [116] visited by an aged and highly-esteemed disciple of Christ, who resided at a distance, — one who had long known eternal life as unconditionally, and therefore certainly, bestowed upon himself through Christ Jesus, and had rejoiced in proclaiming the same truth to a few others, — a conversation to the following effect took place between them.

AGED DISCIPLE. — So I find that you are going to become a clergyman.

YOUTH. — I am, sir.

A. D. — And what is it, if it be a fair question, that you intend to preach?

Y. — The gospel, to be sure Mr. —.

A. D. — The gospel! You are a fool, man. If you do so, you will preach to empty benches.

Y. — Why so? Dr. — preaches the gospel, and yet has an overflowing and most respectable congregation. Mr. —, also, is acknowledged on all hands to preach it, and he is extremely popular.

A. D. — Are you sure, —, that it is the gospel which these men preach? Believe me, I have now known *the truth as it is in Jesus* above forty years, and I never yet heard of a minister proclaiming that truth in its purity and scriptural simplicity who was a favourite with great multitudes.

Y. — What, then, would you have me to do? Your observations have, I confess, perfectly astonished as well as puzzled me.

A. D. — Oh! your question is easily answered. Preach something extremely *like* the gospel. The liker it, the better. Neither cold Socinianism, nor any system that approaches to it, suits the human mind. You must try every possible expedient to rouse your hearers, and then [117] present to them something that appears calculated to carry home peace to their guilty consciences, before you can acquire any very great ascendancy over them. Speak to them, therefore, after having duly alarmed

them, of the righteousness of Christ; dwell on the virtues of his atoning blood; magnify the riches of his free grace; and all this as much as you please: but take care that you do not stop at this point. Contrive always, along with such doctrines as those which I have just alluded to, to slip in hints, that something yet remains and requires to be performed by the creature before he can have any vital interest in Christ Jesus. Let your hearers know, nay impress it upon their minds, notwithstanding your having told them that the Saviour hath done all, that something must be done by them in order to their becoming the objects of his love. Urge it on them, that Christ having done his part, it is incumbent upon them now to do theirs. In the most ardent and impassioned terms, invite them to come to Christ; press them to take hold of and appropriate him; and inform them that it is indispensably necessary, if they would be saved, that they should embrace him as he is freely offered to them in the gospel. In this way, if you are possessed of any popular talents at all, you will gratify your hearers, and both acquire and retain a strong hold upon their affections. But beware, as you value your influence with the multitude, of proclaiming the work of salvation as completed by the Son of God himself alone, without reference to any thought, feeling, or act on the part of the creature; and of insisting on the glorious truth, that every one, to whose conscience the work of Jesus as complete is carried home by the Holy Ghost, finds and knows himself without any efforts [118] of his own, and solely through the manifestation of a truth in the belief of which he is perfectly passive, certainly and everlastinglly righteous and accepted in his divine head. I say, beware of proclaiming such doctrines as these. Were you to do so, by leaving your hearers nothing whatever to do in the matter of salvation, you would deprive fleshly conscience of an employment, in which, while under the influence of natural notions of religion, it always and necessarily delights, and bring your people like a nest of hornets about your ears. No, no. Preach a mixed gospel, —. Appear to magnify Christ; and yet, in reality, contrive to magnify the creature, by assigning to him some task which he is required to perform in order to ensure his own salvation. Thus, instead of leading the creature to glory in Christ alone, induce him as far as in you lies to seek for subject-matter of glorying in himself. And thus set aside covertly the finished salvation of Christ, by causing the creature to suspect that in one way or another he must become his own saviour. In this way you flatter his pride, and no doubt render him your own. For, strange to tell, mankind in religious matters love to be deceived. Jeremiah 5:31. No doubt, both tact and talent are required to manage all this. But its being well executed constitutes the grand secret of clerical popularity.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Why should I conceal the name of the Aged Disciple? It was James Donaldson, the successor of John Barclay, and for many years the Pastor of the Berean Assembly in Edinburgh. I observe him alluded to in some verses quoted by the editor of Kay's Edinburgh Portraits with Biographical Sketches, now in course of publication, vol. I. p. 427: —

"And there'll be Donaldson the preacher,  
A noble Berean frae Dundee."

As to the Youth, he was — no matter who.

Whether or not the youth in question lived to become [119] a clergyman, and whether he took the advice thus tendered to him ironically by the aged disciple in its literal acceptation, or acted upon the spirit of it, this history sayeth not. If he preached a mixed gospel with any reasonable measure of talent, he may have earned and retained a fair quota of popularity. If, on the contrary, notwithstanding the warning given him, he ventured to proclaim Christ as the all and in all of salvation, and human beings as made partakers of eternal life in him without any doings whatever on their part, it is probable that he has long since paid the penalty of his folly by preaching to empty benches.

## SECTION X.

### FOURTH SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

## IS ETERNAL LIFE CONDITIONALLY OR UNCONDITIONALLY BESTOWED?

Conditionally, says the mind of man; unconditionally, says the mind of God.

An opposition so distinct, unequivocal, and complete as this is well deserving of particular attention.

Human nature as delineated in the scriptures of truth, — and where, except in the sacred volume, can we find it delineated truly and profoundly? — appears to have had divine laws of two distinct kinds only addressed to it.

1. In the case of Adam, in Paradise, it had a single *prohibition* imposed upon it, with the *punishment of death* annexed in the event of the prohibition being violated. *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Gen. 2:16,17. Exemption from the punishment threatened, it is plain, was, under such circumstances, the only reward which our common progenitor could by abstaining from evil have ensured. Similar prohibitions, attended by the same sanction of punishment to be inflicted in the event of disobedience, we find in the letter addressed to the nation of Israel. *Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; &c.*

[121] 2. When we consider the case of Jews and Gentiles, after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, we find a single *command* addressed to them, with the *reward of eternal life* promised in the event of its being obeyed. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, that is, believe on Jesus of Nazareth as being both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36, 1 Cor. 12:3, was the command; *and thou shalt be saved*, that is, thou shalt not merely be exempted from the approaching vengeance, Eph. 5:6, but be introduced into the enjoyment of heavenly blessings, Heb. 4:1-11, was the reward promised. Acts 16:31. See also Acts 2:38,39; 3:19-21; 13:46-48; &c. Here there was not, as in the cases of Adam and the Israelites before the coming of Christ, merely evils to be avoided, but likewise blessings to be attained to and enjoyed. Adam and the Jews who lived before the advent of Christ could only, by abstaining from evil, have ensured to themselves exemption from punishment; whereas, those who now complied with the command to believe on Jesus as the Messiah were not only saved from the coming wrath, but over and above had, as the reward of their obedience, conferred upon them an entrance into life everlasting.

Not that human nature was able to comply with divine law, whether issued in the form of *prohibition* accompanied with the sanction of *forfeiture*, or in that of a *command* compliance with which was necessarily to be rewarded with *life everlasting*. For divine law was given in both the forms of *prohibition* and *command* to man, not to evince man's ability to obey it either in the one or in the other, but to afford an opportunity for the display of his utter inability to do so under all conceivable circumstances. Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:20; Acts 28:25-[122]27.<sup>52</sup> Let it be borne in mind, that it was only in one or other of these two forms of *prohibition* or *command* the law of God could be issued to man.

<sup>52</sup> Whenever the principle of faith was implanted, that is, whenever obedience to the divine command was yielded, it was never at the suggestion or under the influence of the mind of flesh, but always in opposition to it. John 1:12,13; Acts 13:48; Eph. 2:8.

This fact leads to the following conclusions: —

1. That except as originally bestowed, or continued on the footing of compliance with the divine law or the fulfilment of conditions imposed by the Creator, human nature can form no conception of the way in which divine and heavenly blessings are to be enjoyed.

2. That in the order and constitution of the human mind and the arrangements of God's providence, exemption from punishment, consequent on abstinence from violation of a prohibition, is the idea of a divine blessing to be realised which is likely first to present itself to man; and that the acquisition of superior advantages, consequent on the fulfilment of a command, is likely to be the result of a more refined and more advanced state of human information and human society. And,

3. That all the conditional notions respecting divine blessings which have, have had, or can have a place in the human mind, must be capable of being reduced to one or other of these two: — either such as regard exemption from sufferings, a privilege to be attained to by abstinence from evil; or such as regard blessings to be acquired by means of obedience yielded to positive commands. Or the conditional views entertained may when analysed be found to consist of a mixture of both classes.

[123] What I have just stated in the form of conclusions are found when examined into, and when our experience is sufficiently enlarged, to be borne out by matter of fact. For,

1. Except as bestowed and enjoyed *conditionally*, fleshly conscience, whenever its dictates are consulted, shews itself to be totally incapable of conceiving of divine things. The fact of scripture addressing fleshly conscience after a *conditional* fashion of itself affords, to those who are accustomed to bow to the language and suggestions of the word of God as always and necessarily infallible, proof positive that there exists no other way of speaking to and being comprehended by it. The further fact, that it is only through the manifestation of all divine *conditions* fulfilled and thereby completely exhausted by the Son of God in flesh, that a way of bestowing eternal life *unconditionally* and a way of bestowing *unconditional* views of the subject could have been opened up, Rom. 10:3-11, Gal. 3:7, *to the end*, carries out this proof to the highest degree of conclusiveness and perfection. And when, in addition to all this, we observe man, on every occasion of his attempting to conceive of God as the conferrer of benefits, obliged to drag him down to his own level, and to represent him to himself as exacting conditions of his favours being enjoyed; — the fact being that, in the regulations and transactions of human society, *conditions* of possessing advantages are necessarily always either understood or expressed; — we merely perceive illustrated in human views and human conduct those *conditional* notions of God and divine things, which from the word of God we had already learned must occupy man's mind, and for the manifestation of which, therefore, on the part of man, we were thoroughly prepared.

[124] 2. The obvious and undeniable tendency of the operations of natural conscience is, in the first place, to lead to abstinence from evil, and this with a view to obtain exemption from punishment. This may be satisfactorily ascertained for himself by any man who will take the trouble to study the character of barbarous nations; of the young and inexperienced; of persons brought up in Roman Catholic countries, and in the Roman Catholic Faith in his own; and of all, except the most carefully educated and instructed, among Protestants. Uniformly among all such is it the first and the predominating dictate of remorse, that is of fleshly conscience roused and alarmed by a sense of evil-doing, to abstain from evil in time to come, and thereby to avoid the sufferings which otherwise and inevitably must follow. A recognition of this as the first tendency of fleshly mind will, indeed, be found in all the superior systems of popular theology. Bunyan's Pilgrim, when first he feels emotions of a religious kind, (mistakenly supposed by that writer and others of the same stamp to be operations of the Spirit, while in point of fact they are merely operations of natural conscience,) attempts, under the directions of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, to please God and satisfy himself by keeping, that is by abstaining from violations of, the law which God addressed from Mount Sinai to Abraham's fleshly descendants. Such, truly, is the first and irresistible tendency of the religious operations of man's mind. They aim at placating God, and thereby securing exemption from punishment at his hands, by fulfilling the condition of abstinence from evil. Very different, however, is all this from an attempt to acquire eternal life by means of the fulfilment of those direct and [125] positive conditions, upon which the enjoyment of it is supposed to depend. Every effort of this sort implies a more advanced state of the fleshly mind than is apparent in the mere avoiding of evil. Man, in the lower stages of civilization and religious knowledge, is incapable of taking such a flight. It is, indeed, a degree of advance in natural religious attainments scarcely to be expected or met with except among Protestants; and those, too, of a more serious and better informed description. Such individuals, observing, and so far observing correctly

enough, that in the New Testament scriptures faith is presented as a command and as *the grand condition* of salvation, take that command home to themselves and endeavour to enforce it upon others. To them it appears clearly to be the condition, upon compliance with which life everlasting to themselves and others depends. Hence exhortations urged by them *to come to Christ, to take hold on him, and to appropriate him*; all of which, stripped of their figurative phraseology, mean simply *to believe on him*. These, wherever they exist and are in frequent use, imply a considerably advanced state of fleshly Christianity. They are never common; probably I should say, they are never used among preachers and congregations where seriousness is awanting, where the standard of conscience is low, where the tone of morals is relaxed, and where indifference respecting religion is the leading characteristic. The lower order of religious instructors content themselves generally with prescribing repentance, or rather abstinence from evil. A congregation must have made a very considerable advance in Pharisaism and fleshly Christianity before faith inculcated as a *command*, and as the sole *condition* of eternal life, can be relished by it. Again,

[126] 3. To exemption from sufferings, consequent on abstinence from evil; or the enjoyment of positive blessings, consequent on the performance of the condition of faith or of something equivalent; all fleshly notions of religion may be reduced. First, when salvation is spoken of, it always in the fleshly vocabulary signifies deliverance from the enduring of future torments, earned in one way or another by repentance, or by the fact of the individual who has sinned sinning no more. And, secondly, eternal life as uniformly and invariably consists, according to the carnally minded, in a continuation or perhaps rather a restoration of this present life in a somewhat improved form: our bodies being again raised as flesh and blood bodies, although somewhat more convenient and desirable vehicles of thought and enjoyment than they now are; and our souls, as being in their opinion immortal, of course continuing as they are with certain alterations for the better: the whole being dependent upon our having duly performed, with or without the divine assistance, the mysterious operation termed faith. Perhaps, indeed, the fleshly system of religion commonly embraces both these ideas. There is exemption from punishment hereafter, to be earned by repentance; and there is the enjoyment of the heavenly blessedness, to be attained to by the exercise of faith. But beyond exemption from future punishment, and the perpetuation hereafter in an improved form of our flesh-and-blood bodies and supposed immortal souls, — the former consequent on repentance, and the latter on the due performance of the act of faith, — fleshly mind cannot rise.

At this point I might stop, satisfied that I had proved, in a manner sufficiently convincing, the conditional notions [127] respecting the enjoyment of heavenly blessings necessarily entertained by fleshly mind; and might proceed to shew the entirely opposite view of the subject which divine mind presents.

Objectors, however, may here be ready to urge: — "Granting, that conditional notions in regard to salvation and life everlasting are the offspring of fleshly mind, and as such opposed to divine mind, it is not thereby evinced, that the ordinary and current views of theology are *conditional*. So far from this, both Papists and Protestants may, for any thing you have proved to the contrary, be holding that life everlasting is freely bestowed upon the creature; and thereby, even according to your own view of the subject, be under the teaching and influence of divine mind. Something more, therefore, is required, in order to the completeness of your argument, than merely to have represented conditional views of salvation to be the offspring of fleshly mind."

Well, then, it is admitted that to represent conditional views of the gospel as fleshly, is not to prove that ordinary bodies of professors of religion are cherishing such views. But, nevertheless, it is matter of fact, that scarcely if at all can a single sect of religionists be met with, whose hopes of divine blessings are not conditional. The purest of such sects, indeed, when their sentiments come to be inquired into, are found to be as chargeable with *conditionalizing* divine promises as the most corrupt.

Mankind of all classes and in all climes possess by nature only fleshly conscience, or a principle which qualifies them to look at religious matters only under a conditional aspect: and the usages of society, which necessarily proceed upon the conditional principle; the religious instructions with which human beings are imbued from their earliest infancy; and the literal structure of the Word of God itself, combined with the two forms of law in which God was pleased originally to propound his revelation of himself to man; all tend to strengthen and confirm that principle of *conditionality* which is the inheritance of their common nature. Man, therefore, unless taught from above and rendered a partaker of the earnest of the risen and glorified mind of Christ, must be entertaining conditional views of life everlasting. But it is as a matter of fact and not of inference, that I proceed to treat of the subject. The charge of cherishing conditional notions respecting salvation and life everlasting, although under no necessity of doing so, I proceed by a reference to the acknowledged tenets of different sects to substantiate. The details of my evidence must of necessity be brief. Little more than hints can be supplied. But enough will be adduced to shew, that as the idea of terms or conditions of life everlasting requiring to be fulfilled by the creature has been proved to be the offspring of fleshly mind, so upon the performance of such terms or conditions is eternal life, by almost all, if not all, existing sects of religionists supposed to depend.

To begin with the beginning: —

In the Church of Rome, the conditionality of future happiness is a principle too glaring and too openly avowed, to admit of doubt or to require being dwelt on. It is only by joining her community and by submitting to the prescriptions of her priesthood that any, according to her authorized dogmas, can obtain salvation. Protestant Churches in general have not, it is true, made a union with themselves absolutely indispensable to the enjoyment [129] of life everlasting. But if they have not done so in so many words, the same thing is done by them in reality. In fact, they are at bottom just as conditional in their views of the matter as their Romish Sister. Puseyites must not have thrown upon them alone the blame of symbolizing in the leading features of their system with Popery. Every body of men which insists on external baptism, external confirmation, and other rites of a similar kind, as means of grace and conditions of enjoying heavenly blessings, may distinguish itself from the Church of Rome in other respects as much as it pleases, but by insisting on the necessity of such ceremonies it nevertheless bears branded upon its forehead, in characters the most broad and indelible, the charge of conditionalizing the gospel. Every body of men, indeed, calling itself a church of God, which demands a compliance with conditions before admission to membership, and consequently, as it supposes, before admission to spiritual privileges, thereby virtually declares that, in its view of things, something to be performed by the creature is essential to his future safety and enjoyment of life everlasting.

A more minute scrutiny into the religious notions entertained by bodies of men formed into what are denominated Christian churches, and by individuals, so far from tending to do away with that impression of their making the fulfilment of terms or conditions on the part of the creature indispensable to eternal happiness, which is produced by a general and rapid survey, tends rather to deepen and strengthen it.

"By virtuous and praiseworthy conduct you recommend yourselves to the favour of God Almighty, and do [130] what in you lies to procure for yourselves the enjoyment of him in a future state of existence," says the Socinian.

"By faith combined with good works you establish a claim to eternal life, through the merits of the only mediator, Jesus Christ," says a blunt, out-spoken clergyman of high church principles.

"The merits of Christ recommend us to the divine acceptance," observes one somewhat more cautious; "nevertheless, we cannot expect to enjoy the favour of God and enter into the heavenly kingdom, unless we aim at and exhibit the virtues and graces of genuine Christianity."

"All this is very gross, and too evidently makes salvation conditional, to leave us in any doubt as to the unregenerate state of him who so thinks," says a professor of religion of a somewhat more strict and pious stamp; a follower of Wesley, for instance. "Such men, by their language, shew themselves to be destitute of the very elements of Christian principle. Their sentiments are almost identical with those of the more enlightened classes of heathens. Their virtues and good works, such as they are, require no influence of the Spirit in order to produce them. Such views we unhesitatingly reject. If to hold them is what you mean by holding conditional notions respecting eternal life, your charge does not attach to us."

And what, then, pray, is your view of the matter?

"Oh! In true religion, it is not virtues which a mere heathen may perform, or graces in which a philosopher may stand forth as the rival of professors of Christianity, that are to save us. We must have a new heart. We must get the Holy Spirit. And in order to this we must [131] seek, pray, strive most earnestly. It will not do to go to work in a slovenly manner. We must be active and stirring in the work of salvation. We must put ourselves in the way of the good things that we seek. We must join class; must observe and detail the workings of our own hearts; must endeavour to benefit by the experience of others;" —. Stop, you fool. What a long catalogue of terms of salvation you have already given us, to which you seem prepared to add many more. Conditionality, forsooth! why, you certainly have no right to charge others with holding unscriptural notions respecting the mode of becoming interested in life everlasting, on the ground of their notions being conditional, when your own system, assuming your account of it to be correct, is rootedly, thoroughly, and demonstrably conditional.

Independents of the Rotherham school of theology, and Baptists holding the sentiments of the late Andrew Fuller, need not plume themselves upon being able, by certain quirks and distinctions with which they are familiar, to escape the charge of *conditionalizing* the gospel. Human beings who, according to them, have a *natural* ability to receive and credit divine testimony, and whose inability to do so is merely *moral*, (a distinction not more unscriptural, Rom. 5:20, 8:7, 1 Cor. 2:14, than it is absurd,) may fitly enough be exhorted and commanded to believe, and threatened with the most awful consequences in the event of their neglecting or refusing to do so: — "Come to Christ. Receive the waters of life freely. Accept of the invitations of God's grace and love, and dread the effects of his resentment once provoked. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. We, as ambassadors of Christ,<sup>53</sup> [132] urge, entreat, exhort, beseech you to come to him. Oh, have mercy upon your own souls: your own precious, immortal souls. Such another opportunity of welcoming and embracing the gospel message may never again be vouchsafed to you." Language of this kind is, I admit, appropriate enough from the lips of those who utter it. It is the blind presumptuously pretending to lead the blind. But need I enter upon any lengthened argument to prove, that by making the salvation of the individual to depend upon his coming to Christ agreeably to their invitations, and thereby performing an act of his own, (whether with or without divine assistance it matters not,) those who thus speak represent the enjoyment of gospel blessings as *conditional*; and fasten upon themselves, as well as upon those who are in the habit of listening to and approving of their preaching, the charge of *conditionalizing* divine truth.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> A most notorious falsehood — seeing that, as Sandeman long since shewed, the Apostles alone were Christ's Ambassadors; and that the message which in that character they proclaimed, and, although dead, by their writings still continue to proclaim, is contained in the New Testament Scriptures.

<sup>54</sup> The last work in favour of the Rotherham system which I have perused, is entitled, "The Reconciler: an attempt to exhibit, in a somewhat new light, the harmony and the glory of the divine government, and of the divine sovereignty. By a Quadragenarian in the ministry. London, 1841." This is understood to be a production of Mr. Weaver, of Mansfield. It is a very clever and ingenious performance. To those who cannot procure Dr. Williams's large work, it may be recommended, as exhibiting a fair abridgement of his system. Throughout it proceeds, as a matter of course, on the slight blunder of resting the exercise of divine

sovereignty in the salvation of the church on the basis of divine justice alone, at the expense of a vast deal of sophistry and floundering; instead of resting the divine justice, in all its procedure towards the creature, upon its only true basis, the divine sovereignty. That is, the author has committed the very common mistake of putting the effect before the cause. The view of matters now suggested, it would, however, be too much to expect fleshly mind to brook.

[133] "What!" exclaims some sober, serious, and zealous churchman, whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian, "are unconverted persons not to be exhorted to read the Scriptures, to pray, and to attend on ordinances, without this being supposed to interfere with the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace?" Am I to understand, that you represent these acts of the creature as indispensable on his part, previous to his possession of the knowledge of God; and as calculated by their very performance, and even by the necessarily self-righteous spirit in which they are performed, to lead a natural man to apprehend eternal life to be bestowed upon him freely?" Certainly, I do so. "Why, then, have the goodness to step aside. You, no less than those who have gone before, stand self-convicted of rendering *conditional* the blessings of salvation, and you must, therefore, be contented to take your place with them. To urge a man to perform any act, — I care not what it be, — in order to his coming to Christ and believing on him, so far from tending to overcome the natural self-righteousness of the human mind, is on the contrary to fasten down upon it and confirm all its self-righteous propensities; and is to do what in you lies to hide from the individual the freeness of the gift of life everlasting.

The adherents of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine in Scotland, and of James Hervey in England, notwithstanding the many excellent things with which the writings of these eminent men abound, cannot, while they adopt their views as a whole, get rid of the charge which I have brought against other classes of religionists. Christ is, in their apprehension, a saviour by office for all mankind. And upon this his universal official character is founded [134] what they conceive to be the gospel proclamation — a proclamation universal in its nature, and involving in it calls and invitations addressed to all mankind. "Jesus," say their ministers in their pulpit discourses, "is offering himself to all of you. O, take him at his word. It is your business to close in with his offers, by a genuine and lively faith. Appropriate him to yourselves thereby, with all his divine and heavenly blessings.<sup>55</sup> Your eternal all is at stake. And remember, that upon your believing or not believing on him, depends your living for ever with him in heaven, or your being consigned to the regions of endless woe." How *conditional* upon such principles is life everlasting made to be! Alas! it is not the magnifying of divine grace and the condemnation of self-righteousness in so many words, in other parts of this system, which can rescue it from being referred to the catalogue of those religious theories which *conditionalize*, and thereby destroy, the gift of life everlasting.

<sup>55</sup> If spared, I must endeavour to bring out a new edition of John Nicol's little treatise on the Appropriating Act. It exposes that figment of popular theologians with great but merited severity. At the present day it is much called for. True, it is the plain production of a plain man. But it is not on that account the less valuable, or the less likely to be useful.

Even Dr. Hawker and the High Calvinists of the present day, with Twiss, Ames, and others of a former period, glorious scriptural and profound as their views in various respects are, appear, when their system is examined into, to be *conditionalizing* divine promises. Leaving out of view other exceedingly defective parts of the hyper-calvinistic and supra-lapsarian theory, how painful to find Hawker, for instance, representing the gospel as addressed to "mourning souls — to doubting and fearing souls — to souls which have been much and painfully exercised with [135] a sense of sin," &c. Why, what is this, but to represent the persons to whom the gospel comes home with power as already possessed of some other and better qualification than that of being men? — some other and better qualification than that of being descendants of Adam, and involved in the consequences of his one transgression? Without the mourning, &c., they would not be fit recipients of salvation; that is, in other words, the mourning, &c., become the *conditions* upon which it is bestowed upon them! Need I go

farther into this theory in order to evince its agreement in the grand and distinctive feature of *conditionality* with all the other fleshly systems of religion to which I have already adverted?

Conditionality, then, enters as a component part into and pervades every form of the popular system of religion. From those who talk openly and honestly of our being saved on the terms and conditions of the gospel, to those who, after pretending to glory in divine grace and in salvation as freely bestowed, notwithstanding contrive to vitiate all their statements by urging some qualifications as necessary to be possessed, or some refined act as necessary to be performed by the creature, in order to his obtaining an interest in Christ Jesus, — all are characterized by this one feature: they do not behold the work of salvation as in reality already finished by Christ alone; and thereby they do not behold eternal life conferred freely upon the creature independently of all qualifications and acts on his part. Hence their exhortations to read the Scriptures, to pray, and to attend on ordinances for the purpose of obtaining faith; hence their exhortations to come to Christ, to believe on him, to appropriate him, and to accept of his offers in order to become the objects [136] of his love; hence, in a word, their exhortations to abstain from this and to do that, with a view to qualify themselves for the reception of Christ and to obtain admission into his kingdom. So far from Jesus having accomplished the whole work of salvation, — so far from having completed it alone and entirely, — he hath only in their opinion done his part, and it now remains for the creature to do his. Without this particular and indispensable act of the individual, Christ, in so far as he is concerned, has died in vain. That is, the act of the Creator is nothing — is absolutely null and void — unless followed up and perfected by an act of the mere creature!

"A god self-made! ambition how divine!"

In what absurdities as well as blasphemies is it not plainly the tendency of carnal and popular religion to land itself?

But are the smaller sects of professing Christians more scriptural in their views of this important subject?

Not the pure Glassites or Sandemanians certainly: for notwithstanding their oft and clearly expressed disclaimer of faith as more than a passive conviction of the truth of the divine testimony, and their very proper preference of the object of faith to mere faith itself, their supposed *work of faith, labour of love, and self-denied obedience* consequent on what they call believing, constituting the *conditions* upon which any of their body can regard himself as having a personal interest in life everlasting, as a matter of course render his prospect of enjoying that blessing *conditional*.

Not the followers of Archibald M'Lean or the Scotch Baptists, taking along with these the adherents of Mr. [137] Ingham in England, and the Old Independent body in Scotland: for, besides their *general* agreement with the Sandemanians, — the addition of adult baptism, as a requisite of church membership, being the principal exception in the case of those first mentioned, — obedience to what they denominate the commandments of God and perseverance therein are what they propose as the grand tests of spiritual Christianity, and consequently as the conditions of possessing life everlasting. *Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*, is a quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews,<sup>56</sup> which, in the most perfect ignorance of its meaning and application, is constantly in their mouths. Conditionality is thus a vital and prominent part of their system.

<sup>56</sup> Heb. 3:6. Also, Ibid., 14.

Not those who share in the sentiments of the late John Walker, sometime fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. With much that is excellent and instructive, in common with the Sandemanians, M'Leanites, Inghamites, and Old Scotch Independents, they exhibit the same general feature of making obedience

to the commandments of God, that is, obedience to the whims and caprices of their leaders for the time being, the proof of their genuine Christianity, and thereby in reality the *condition* of their salvation. Those who know the history of infant baptism, as for a time practised by members of that sect and then relinquished; of the kiss of charity; and so on, will have no difficulty in understanding my meaning.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> I cannot dismiss these three varieties of the same general principle, which, for want of a better term, I may denominate Sandemanianism, without taking this opportunity of expressing my conviction of the obligations under which they have laid the true church of God by their existence, and the writings to which they have given birth; and of the important results already flowing, and likely still further to flow, from the promulgation of Sandemanian tenets. What extensively read theologian has failed to make himself acquainted with the "Letters on Theron and Aspasio" of the acute Sandeman; the "Christ's commission to his Apostles" of the clear-headed, shrewd, and practically-minded M'Lean; and the "Letters to Alexander Knox, Esq., " of the logical and vigorous Walker? Indeed, who that has gone so far would rest satisfied without perusing, even at the risk of much weariness arising from their prolixity and repetitions, the works of John Glas? The men themselves have passed away. Their respective sects are fast following. But their writings remain, and their principles are merely now beginning to exhibit something of their innate power, and to exert their assimilating efficacy. Almost all our popular treatises on the subject of religion are now more or less imbued with them. They occupy a prominent place in many extensively circulated recent publications on experimental piety. Ancient religious doctrines and modes of expression are fast fading away before them. And why? Because they are at bottom truly spiritual and divine? Oh no. This was never a reason for any religious notions coming into vogue and becoming generally acceptable. It is because they appear to simplify a subject, in itself profound and intricate; and because, in their statements of scriptural doctrines, without having always or even frequently succeeded in finding out and establishing what is true, they have, in a great number of instances, been the means of exposing what is glaringly and sometimes even ridiculously false.

[138] Not the Plymouth Brethren. Holding many views that are most scriptural and edifying, they too are *conditionalizing* the gospel. Jesus, although in their opinion dying to take away the sin of the whole world, is nevertheless, according to them, capable of bestowing eternal life only upon those who believe. Hence, he is held up by them to the acceptance of all, and is offered to the faith of all: it being necessary that he should be received by the individual, before such an one can obtain an interest in the blessings of his salvation. What is this but to make salvation *conditional* or dependent on the *term* of believing?

But why treat particularly of the minor sects? With [139] the exceptions afterwards to be mentioned, — if even they are to be considered exceptions, — I know none which, if pushed, would deny the *conditionality* of their notions regarding eternal life. Quakers unhesitatingly make the following of their supposed natural<sup>58</sup> light within and abstinence from evil the means of leading to Christ, and thereby the *conditions* of being interested in his salvation. Swedenborgians, rejecting the ordinary ideas of the atonement, take care to impress upon our minds the fact that only on the performance of the *conditions* which they enumerate can human beings participate in any of their threefold forms of heavenly blessings. And the followers of the late Mr. Irving, insisting on believers in flesh being as Christ himself was while in flesh, of course subject them to law, and require of them, as was required of Christ, complete obedience to it before they can acquire a right or title to life everlasting. And so of other sects. Some *condition*, no matter what, must in the opinion of all of them be performed before *spiritual blessings* can be enjoyed.

<sup>58</sup> Supernatural, of course, they consider it. See Matthew 6:23.

Even ordinary Universalists are not free from the charge of *conditionalizing* the gospel: for although they profess to believe in a salvation accomplished by Christ alone, they cannot see the possibility of its being carried into effect except by the performance of certain *conditions* by beings in flesh, and the undergoing of a certain degree and duration of torments by beings hereafter. A salvation freely and without the intervention of any conditions whatever bestowed upon the creature, is what they seem

never to have formed any conception of.

Johnsonian Baptists, Bereans or followers of John [140] Barclay of various denominations, and the Salemites of Devonshire, certainly make, in some respects., a nearer approximation to the truth of the absolute *unconditionality* of eternal life, than do any of the sects yet alluded to. Their members profess to see eternal life *freely*, and therefore *certainly* bestowed upon themselves. But alas! they are in their respective theories far from being perfect. Sad self-inconsistency characterizes them all. The Salemites, of the three, alone understand the distinction between soul and spirit, and reject the resurrection of a flesh and blood body: they in doing so, however, mingling many errors with the truths which they hold.<sup>59</sup> The works of their respective founders and the discourses delivered by their preachers, especially of the Johnsonian Baptist and Berean bodies, abound, in spite of the more perfect parts of their systems, with *conditional* language. Indeed, how can it be otherwise? None of them have been enabled to apprehend Jesus in any higher character than that of *spiritual Abraham* or *head of the Church*, that is *of a part of the human race only*. And while thus *limiting* the extent of his grace, how can they entertain those *full, free, and absolutely unconditional* views of his character, the possession of which necessarily implies that he has been revealed as *spiritual Adam* or *head of all*?

<sup>59</sup> They limit salvation to the Church; they blot out the present reign of the Messiah as spiritual Abraham; they understand not divine inversion; and they do not seem to apprehend how the resurrection of the body which we now have may be held, while yet we deny that it is raised as a flesh and blood body. The swallowing up of the natural in the spiritual, and the assimilation thereby of the natural to the spiritual, through the death and resurrection of the Son of God, is a doctrine which, in its fulness, they remain yet to be taught. By the Salemites, the *Devonshire Chronicle* is employed as the grand vehicle of giving their sentiments to the world. I wish that they could be induced to publish a collection of the principal letters which have from time to time appeared in it.

[141] Such, then, is an abstract of my proof of almost all if not all classes of religionists holding, either more or less, conditional notions respecting the enjoyment of salvation and life everlasting. If I have wronged any body of men, it has not been done intentionally. A man or body of men has only honestly to declare, "I or we have seen eternal life freely and unconditionally, and therefore certainly, belonging to me or us, on the ground of our being descendants equally of the first and second Adams, and not of any peculiar qualifications which we possess as individuals;" and, in that case, none of the censures which I have pronounced are or can be applicable to them.

To sum up: —

The mind of man is cast naturally in a conditional mould; or, from its constitution and circumstances, it is incapable of regarding blessings of a spiritual kind as bestowed, except on the ground of the possession or fulfilment of certain terms or conditions by him who is made the recipient of such blessings.

This conditionality of sentiments arises from the mind of man being naturally and essentially limited: a mind so constituted necessarily regarding the Creator himself likewise as being limited in the conferment of his favours, as well as in every other respect. Psalm 50:21; Matt. 20:15. That is, as so far from possessing the power of bestowing his favours freely, that he is confined to the bestowing of them upon those only who possess certain qualifications. Acts 15:1; Ibid. 22:21,22; Galatians, *throughout*.

That the human mind is essentially conditional, is established,

1 . By the manner of God's addressing it: which is, either in the way of the *prohibition* of some act, a compliance with which was to be the condition of not incur-[142]ring the forfeiture of blessings already possessed; or of *command* to perform some act, a compliance with which alone could ensure the acquisition of higher blessings. Conditions of one or other of these two kinds are always implied, in communications from the Creator to the creature.

2. By the manner in which God represents eternal life as becoming the property of the creature. It is through the complete and everlasting fulfilment of all conditions of life everlasting by the Son of God as one with us. Jesus is *the end of the law for righteousness*. Rom. 10:4. See, also, John 19:30; Rom. 5:21; Ibid. 6:23; Gal. 3:6, *to the end*. And,

3. By the fact of all fleshly-minded individuals, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, whether learned or unlearned, whether rich or poor, whether young or old, whether banded together in religious associations or standing alone, uniformly and necessarily supposing that some condition or conditions, it matters not what, have been fulfilled or require yet to be fulfilled in or by creatures, in order to their personally becoming partakers of life everlasting.

Fleshly mind, that is man's mind, then, supposes the enjoyment of heavenly blessings to be in some one way or another the result of its own acts; or supposes it to be impossible for God to save and bestow everlasting life upon any of his creatures, except by means of their own co-operation and concurrence. The creature must help the Creator. And unless the Creator receive the creature's aid, all his own divine exertions are in vain! Such, briefly but correctly expressed, is the doctrine of fleshly mind on this all important subject.

Let us now turn and listen to what God says respecting [143] the ground of bestowing heavenly blessings, and we shall find his word to be in direct and diametrical opposition to all the notions entertained by man respecting it.

*The gift of God is eternal life, or eternal life is the gift of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord.* Rom. 6:23.

Can a simpler, a more explicit, or a more decisive settlement of the controversy than this be required? Man alleges that eternal life is bestowed *conditionally*. God declares that he confers it *unconditionally*. Which of the two are we to credit? At all events, it must be admitted that no two statements can be conceived more antagonistic or contradictory of each other, than that of man and that of God, just quoted, as to the way in which the creature becomes the recipient of life everlasting.

It is freely admitted, that to *conditions* of eternal life the Lord Jesus while in flesh was subjected. That is, as upon *the first man of the earth, earthly*, alone, had been imposed the condition *on which the continuance of this present life was to depend*; so upon *the second man, the Lord from heaven*, alone, were imposed the conditions *of the acquirement of life everlasting*. True, with a view to bring out and render manifest man's inability to comply with divine law issued even in its most favourable form, belief in our Lord's compliance with these conditions was, during the forty years of the ministry of the Holy Ghost which succeeded his death and resurrection, proposed to all, in the apostolic testimony, as the *condition* of their becoming partakers of New Testament and spiritual blessings; but in reality the *conditions* of acquiring life everlasting were *imposed on the Lord Jesus alone*, and were by him *completely fulfilled*. John 19:30; Rom. 10:4. The obvious conclusion from this, — indeed, the doctrine expressly taught in Rom. 6:23, — is that eternal life, on [144] the fulfilment of whatever *conditions* it might have been made to depend to our blessed Lord,<sup>60</sup> at all events comes through him *unconditionally* to us. And the still profounder although strictly consistent doctrine which, through the whole word of God, shines unto the minds of the spiritually enlightened is, that the prescribing of conditions of eternal life to the Son of God manifest in flesh, conditions requiring to be and which could be fulfilled only by him, is a communication to us, made in such a form and way as from the *conditional* structure of our minds we are capable of apprehending, that *there are, in reality, no conditions of the enjoyment of eternal life at all*. If God himself is not only the imposer, but also in flesh the fulfiller of *conditions* of the enjoyment of heavenly blessings, what is this but to acquaint us, in the only way in which as limited and therefore *conditional* beings the subject can take hold upon our minds, that *these blessings become ours unconditionally?*

<sup>60</sup> Philippians 2:6-11. See also Galatians 3:6, *to the end*.

Ignorance of the grossest kind seems, among men calling themselves Christians, to attach to every fact and circumstance connected with the manifestation of our Lord in flesh and his subsequent glorification. Instead of setting free from law, listening to such persons one would suppose that Jesus, by dying and rising again, became the imposer of laws more stringent and more severe than any that had previously existed. Instead of having fulfilled all the conditions of eternal life and being now engaged in revealing that fact from his throne, listening to such persons one must conclude, that our Lord's grand employment now is to enforce the fulfilment of the conditions of eternal life upon the hearts and consciences of men. In a [145] word, instead of Jesus giving the members of the church to see that eternal life is God's gift, such men seem to delight in representing it to be his present work to throw a veil over the unconditional enjoyment of eternal life altogether, or, rather, to shew that there can be no such thing. Let us try if we cannot, by means of the light of divine truth, dispel to a certain degree this ignorance, and thereby get rid of the erroneous doctrines of which it has been productive.

It seems to be scarcely, if at all known, that the New Testament Scriptures make a distinction between the state of Reconciliation and the state of Salvation. And yet the difference between the two is laid down, in terms clear although succinct, in Rom. 5:6-11, especially in verse 10th. Indeed, the earlier part of the chapter is an enumeration of some of the blessings and privileges of the preliminary state of Reconciliation, as distinguished from those of the state of Salvation which was destined to succeed. Thus we find that a distinction between the two states exists. Among the few, however, whose attention has been drawn to this fact, scarcely one in a thousand seems to have discovered for himself, or to have been capable of explaining to others, wherein consists the distinction itself.

The truth is, that the nature of the distinction can only be understood by those who have been made aware, by divine teaching, that the family of man and the Church of God each and severally first appeared in an earthly and fleshly form; and this, in subserviency to their each and severally appearing, but in the inverse order of the Church of God and the family of man, in a heavenly and spiritual one. For the purpose of simplifying the matter, we throw out of view at present the family of man altogether; and [146] confine ourselves to the consideration of the church, first in its fleshly, and then in its spiritual form; first, as reconciled, and then as saved.

Well, then, the Church of God was first earthly and fleshly. In this its fleshly form it had contracted much guilt, by incessant and grievous violations of God's law; and, especially, by the crucifixion of the Lord Messiah, an act whereby its existence as a fleshly church, or its enjoyment of religious blessings as consisting of Abraham's fleshly descendants, was virtually brought to an end. But God's intention before utterly destroying its fleshly form was to reconcile it, or rather to shew that it had been reconciled, even in that inferior form, to himself; and that its reconciliation had taken place through the medium of the death of his well-beloved son. Rom. 5:10. For this purpose, it was still, during the period of forty years after Christ's death and resurrection, retained in existence as a fleshly church; that is, as Israel in a former age had been forty years in passing from Egypt into Canaan, so was it then, likewise, to be forty years in passing between the Egypt of Moses' law and the Canaan of complete and everlasting heavenly enjoyment.<sup>61</sup> This fleshly form of the Church made its appearance in the various external bodies, communities, or churches which were by the apostles, under divine direction, set up. But the reconciliation, although so far completed by the death of the Son of God as to have taken away all the transgressions with which Abraham's descendants had rendered themselves chargeable under the first testament, Heb. 9:15,<sup>62</sup> nevertheless could only be enjoyed *conditionally*. [147] Not on the *condition* of their fulfilling Moses's law; for that Jesus had already done: but on the sole *condition* of their believing that Jesus, as the Son of God, had fulfilled it, evinced by their abstaining from all attempts to establish their own righteousness, and by their obeying the commandments issued to them by the apostles. Rom. 10:4; Acts 16:31: also, Gal. 5:2-4, and 2 Peter 3:2. Those who so believed

entered into the enjoyment of the blessings and privileges of *reconciliation*; Rom. 5:1-11; those who believed not excluded themselves from these. Acts 13:46. Thus was it evinced of whom the actually reconciled fleshly church consisted. Not of all who could boast of their descent from the patriarchs of the highly favoured nation. For *they were not all Israel which were of Israel*. Rom. 9:6. But of those only who believed on Jesus as proclaimed in the apostolic testimony, whether Jews or Gentiles, during the forty years of the reconciliation of the Church in its fleshly form; and of all who had believed on the future Messiah, during that long period of its existence which preceded his advent. Thus *they which were the children of the flesh*, or the Israelitish nation as a whole, *these were not the children or Church of God; but the children of the promise were counted for the seed*. Rom. 9:8. See also Gal. 3:26-29. Or, to avail myself of the language of a most instructive portion of Scripture already adverted to, *they which were called*, whether Jews or Gentiles and they only, *received the promise of eternal inheritance*. Heb. 9:15. A state of *reconciliation*, it hence appears, was the state of the Church during the lifetime and personal ministry of the apostles. 2 Cor. 5:18-20. It implied, while it continued, the existence of the church still in an external and fleshly form. Acts 2:41,42; 10:44-47; [148] &c. It was enjoyed *conditionally*, — the *condition* having been faith in Jesus as the Messiah, evinced by obedience to the apostolic commandments. Acts 3:16; Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19,20; 2 Thess. 3:14. And it was a state from which the apostles and their fellow believers looked forward to the approach of a higher one. Philip. 3:8-14. In short, the fleshly church or body of Christ formerly in a state of enmity to God had, through the death of Christ, been brought into a state of reconciliation to him: Ephes. 2:13-18: a state, however, which, although important and implying the possession of many valuable privileges, was merely preliminary and temporary, and to be superseded by a higher and more glorious state then speedily to be revealed. Rom. 5:10.

<sup>61</sup> So was Christ himself forty days *on earth* after his passion and resurrection, Acts 1:3, before he ascended to *glory*.

<sup>62</sup> See also Rom. 3:25.

And the state of *reconciliation* did pass away. The heavenly bridegroom, John 3:29, having prepared the Church in her earthly form to be his heavenly bride, Rev. 19:7-9, by the *reconciliation* of believers whether living before or after his advent to himself, at last made his appearance to *save* her. That is, he appeared to take her out of her earthly form, and consequently to take her out of and deliver her from all connexion with this present evil world: thereby consummating those heavenly nuptials which had been her destined portion and privilege from everlasting. For this purpose, at midnight or the close of the earthly dispensation, — which was at one and the same moment the period of nature's deepest darkness and lowest point of depression, and also the turning point towards a new day, even the day of the Lord, — there was a cry made, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*. Matt. 25:6. The book of Revelation, which was the uttering of this cry, Rev. 22:12,20, was about [149] the close of the period of *reconciliation* (not A.D. 96, but about A.D. 68 or 69,) <sup>63</sup> penned by the apostle John, the only one of the sacred band of the apostles privileged to *tarry till Jesus came*; John 21:22; and was by him published to announce the rapid approach of the period of *salvation* or *deliverance*. The whole of that magnificent and glorious book, indeed, although wrapped up in mysteries to mere fleshly mind, consists of information respecting the then approaching *salvation* of the Church, and of contrasts between the state of *reconciliation* and that of *salvation*. From it and from the rest of scripture illustrated by it we learn, that in consequence of her being *saved*, the *fleshly* and thereby the *conditional* state of the Church was at once and for ever brought to an end. It no longer was upon *earth*, *reconciled* merely through Jesus' *death*; but it was *in heaven*, *standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion*, as the result of having been *saved by his life*. Rev. 14:1. Rom. 5:10. And its members were no longer *walking by faith*, or by the performance of the *condition of believing in Jesus as the Christ*, upon persevering in which their entrance into the glorified state hung suspended; Heb. 3:7, *to the end*; 4:1-11; but by *sight*, a state implying the present and everlasting enjoyment of the blessings in which they had previously believed,

and for which they had previously waited: a state from which, as being now in *actual possession* of the blessings, all *conditions of obtaining them* were of course excluded. 2 Cor. 5:6-8. The *saved* [150] state of the Church, then, is not like the *reconciled* one *earthly* and *conditional*, but *heavenly* and *unconditional*; and as the saved state of the Church is that which has existed since Jerusalem's destruction, and which will continue to exist till the end of time, — as it is the state in which we and all the rest of Christ's people are now, — of course, the present state of the Church is one in which *earthliness* and *conditionality* are unknown.

<sup>63</sup> See Sir Isaac Newton on the subject. Dr. Tilloch's *Dissertations on the Apocalypse*, London, 1823, may with advantage be consulted. Only, against one view of the Dr.'s I must enter my most decided protest.

Instead of the book of Revelation being the *first*, it is to me unquestionably the *last*, of the New Testament writings.

The statement contained in the preceding paragraph requires, in order to be understood, to be opened up and dwelt on at somewhat greater length. No external and earthly church of Christ has existed since the days of the apostles, and the period of Jerusalem's subversion; and no external and earthly church of Christ will ever exist again. The community or incorporation called the Church of Rome, and other external bodies of a similar description, have pretended to be, or have attempted to set up, such earthly churches: but in vain. The Church of Israel, in its external form, was certainly once the Church of God; but it is now an accursed Jericho which none can ever, except at their own risque and with the menace of utter extermination hanging over themselves and their labours, try to erect again.<sup>64</sup> Such external religious bodies or associations as I have just alluded to are, at the best, attempting to perpetuate the *reconciled* or *earthly state of the Church*, in opposition to God, who, eighteen hundred years since, set up and established his Church in its *saved* and therefore *heavenly state*. The heavenly church or New Jerusalem, Gal. 4:26-28, indeed, at the period of the earthly Jerusalem's destruction and the overthrow of the *unreconciled* portion of [151] the fleshly church, commenced its descent from heaven to earth. Rev. 21:2. Not in order to become *earthly* itself; but to elevate the minds of beings still *on earth* to a conformity with itself, and thereby to an enjoyment of its own high and holy and *heavenly* privileges. Ibid. 3. The heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, who became heavenly at the period of his ascension to God's right hand; and the Bride, consisting of all the members of the Church in its previously *reconciled* state, now rendered heavenly herself and united in marriage to the Lamb for ever; have, since the period of Jerusalem's destruction, been propagating an offspring even among persons still in flesh *heavenly* and *saved* like themselves. Not persons *reconciled* to God: for the *reconciled* were members of the Church in her *fleshly* and *external* form; and these having in due time appeared constituting the Bride the Lamb's wife, viz., when she acquired her heavenly character, and when her nuptials with her heavenly Bridegroom were consummated, reconciliation was thereby shewn to be complete, and the existence of any in a *state of reconciliation* merely became thenceforward impossible. On the contrary, those who now are members of the Church are *saved* ones: that is, not persons formed into external and thereby earthly communities, who by that very circumstance evince that they are *not saved*; but persons who, by a heavenly descent or by having been born again from above, inherit the earnest of the present nature and state of Christ and his Bride. They possess principles which are internal and heavenly; or inconceivable by and hid from the world, like those of their divine parents. 1 John 3:1. They are persons scattered here and there, — one of a city, and two of a [152] family, — and not formed into external or earthly associations at all. — And, then, as to *conditions* of possessing the blessing of salvation. Of these *there are none*. God does not select the objects of his special love and beget the members of his heavenly family upon any earthly grounds, or upon the principle of any terms whatever having been fulfilled by themselves. He calleth one here and another there to the knowledge of himself, just as it pleaseth him, in fulfilment of the *purpose which he purposed in himself before the world began*. Here, a man of previously correct character; there, a man of previously profligate morals. Here, one adorned with all the graces of science and literature; there,

one totally illiterate. Here, a youth; there, a man of mature age. Here, a freeman; there, a slave. And as there are no human and no humanly-conceivable *conditions* of God's choice, so are there no conditions seen to be involved in their own possession of heavenly blessings by those upon whom they are conferred. They find themselves even already possessed of righteousness and life everlasting in their divine head, in virtue of the divine discovery to them of the fact — and that is all. Upon no natural or earthly principles can they account for a privilege so great having become theirs. It is enough for them, that they see themselves just as certainly righteous and living for ever in Jesus, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; as they see themselves sinful and dying in the first Adam, the man of the earth, earthly: and this, solely, because God through his word hath seen meet to make both facts known to them.

<sup>64</sup> Joshua 6:26: compare with Rev. 18:4,19-24; &c.

Properly speaking, and were I disposed to refine upon the matter, those to whom the knowledge of God is communicated now are not so much *saved ones*, as persons who through the medium of the saved ones have had the *earnest of life everlasting* conferred upon them. The *saved ones* were properly all who had been possessed of the divine principle of faith before the Messiah's coming; and all upon whom that divine principle had been conferred by the Spirit, either during our Lord's personal ministry, or through the medium of the apostolic testimony before the destruction of Jerusalem and the close of the external and fleshly dispensation. Those believers as a body already *reconciled* were, by the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom at that period, also *saved*; that is, they were then altogether *delivered* from Moses's law and from this present evil world or fleshly state. Formerly partakers of the benefits of Christ's *death* and thereby *reconciled*, they then became partakers of the benefits of his *ascension state or life* and were thereby *saved*. Formerly *earthly*, they then, as the Bride the Lamb's wife, became *heavenly* like the Bridegroom himself. And as the spouse of the Lamb they became thenceforward the parent of individuals, not accurately speaking *saved*, — for that was their own present superior, as contrasted with their own former inferior character, — but *possessed of that principle of life everlasting* to which, through being *saved*, they had themselves attained. Viewed in this light, an additional and to me beautifully interesting inversion is presented. Naturally, the *death of Christ* precedes or goes before the *reconciliation* of the Church in flesh; but spiritually, the *salvation of the Church* or its being rendered heavenly precedes or goes before the manifestation and communication of the *life of Christ*. Or, to bring the subject under the notice of my readers in another form: —

[154]

NATURALLY.

1

Death of Christ.

2

Reconciliation.

SPIRITUALLY.

2

Life of Christ.

1

Salvation.

Notwithstanding, however, that this is an exact representation of matters, viz., the *Church first saved, and then eternal life through the salvation of the Church conferred*, yet as those who have known the truth since the apostolic period, those who know it now, and those who shall know it till the end of time are the offspring of Jesus the saved one as well as *Saviour*, and of those *saved ones* of whom his Bride the Church consists; and as besides, by possessing the *earnest of life everlasting*, they are *saved* or *delivered* even here from their former ignorance, enmity to God, and fleshliness of principle, — thereby shewing themselves to inherit the saved nature of the Lamb and the Bride, — I think that, while

the members of the *heavenly* Church continue in flesh as to their *earthly* nature, (that church itself, however, being in no respect whatever *earthly*,) it may be said of them with truth, equally that they are *saved*, and that they have had conferred upon them *the earnest of the heavenly life of Christ*. *Reconciled* they cannot at all with truth be said to be: because *reconciliation* is language applicable to the effects of the *death*, not to those of the *life* of Christ; Rom. 5:10; and because, consequently, however important a privilege *reconciliation* formerly might be, — indeed, so important, that without previous *reconciliation* of the Church in her fleshly form there could have been no subsequent *salvation*, — it was nevertheless a privilege belonging to an [155] inferior and earthly state of the Church which has long since passed away.

But whatever may be the terms exactly applicable to those who are members of the Church in her present or heavenly form, while they continue in bodies of flesh and blood, — whether *saved ones*, or *persons who inherit the earnest of the life of Christ* by being the offspring of the *saved* Bridegroom and Bride, or *both*, — the grand truth to be insisted on and enforced on the minds of my readers is, that they possess their privilege of *salvation* or *life everlasting unconditionally*. The scriptural principle of inversion requires it; the word of truth positively declares it. Looking at that inversion or opposition of things divine to things human, which we have seen running through the sacred volume, we must conclude that the state of matters should be thus: — Naturally, that, first of all, privileges should be announced as destined to be bestowed at *a future period*; and then, secondly, that the enjoyment of these privileges should be made to depend on *conditions* to be fulfilled. But spiritually, that, first of all, God should be represented as possessed of a sovereign and unquestionable right to dispose of his creatures and of all their concerns as to him seemeth good, or that it should be impossible for the creature to fasten upon him any obligation, either through the fulfilment of *conditions* or otherwise; and then, secondly, that he should in the exercise of his free, sovereign, and uncontrolled authority bestow blessings, not only *unconditionally*, but likewise *presently* or *even now* upon the children of men. Or that,

NATURALLY,

Earthly privileges — result of conditions fulfilled;

[156]

SPIRITUALLY,

Heavenly privileges — bestowed independently of conditions,

Or,

Earthly mind — subject to conditions.

Heavenly mind — subjecting conditions to itself.

And agreeable to these our conclusions do we find the actual representations of scripture to be. Man was to have had his earthly life continued to him *conditionally*. Gen. 2:16,17; 3:19. The descendants of Abraham and others were to have inherited *reconciliation* with God, and consequently *salvation*, *conditionally*. Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; 17:30,31. Let the picture now be reversed. With the state of *reconciliation*, carried into effect through the *fulfilled condition* of the death of Christ and the *fulfilled condition* on the part of the Church of faith in him, and thereby run up into the state of *salvation*, the principle of *conditionality* terminates. The state of *salvation*, and thereby of the *enjoyment of life everlasting*, is *unconditionally* bestowed. *Eternal life is the gift of God*. Rom. 6:23. Rev. 7, *throughout*. From it, *conditionality* of every description, on the part of the creature and of creature nature, is absolutely and altogether and for ever excluded. The Church formerly fleshly, and in that state dependent on *conditions*, having been first *reconciled* to God and then *saved* by him, now enjoys *eternal life freely* or *unconditionally*. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according*

*to his mercy he saves us*, says the most eminent of the members of the Church in its reconciled state, in his own name and in that of his fellow believers. Titus 3:5. Indeed, to go a little more deeply into the subject, as to [157] the Church in its present or heavenly form it never had any thing whatever to do with *conditions*. It was the object of the love of God in Christ, before the foundation of the world; and was cherished by him with an affection, like himself, unchangeable and everlasting. Its members, therefore, as one with Christ, and not on the ground of any conditions fulfilled or to be fulfilled by themselves, are secure of participating in Christ's life, through the divine purpose carried into effect by the divine omnipotence. They cannot by any possibility come short of it. They cannot be frustrated in their right to the enjoyment of it. No conditions require to be fulfilled, either by themselves or others, in order to their possessing it; and no impediments whatever, whether interposed by themselves or others, can hinder its being bestowed on them. It is theirs. Theirs, treasured up for them and secured to them in Christ Jesus; theirs, to be manifested to them and conferred upon them, while in flesh, at God's appointed time; and theirs, to be enjoyed by them certainly, indefeasibly, and for ever.

Complete, then, with reference to this point as well as to every other, is the opposition between the mind of man and the mind of God. Man by nature is totally unable to conceive of divine and heavenly blessings *at all*, much less to conceive of them as, in the strictest sense of the term, bestowed *unconditionally*; and hence, even in his nearest natural approaches to that view, he is always found making faith in Christ, love to him, and perseverance in his cause indispensable to the *salvation* of the individual, or, in other words and without any circumlocution, making them the *conditions* of his *salvation*. And this, because, being unable with his *earthly* mind to conceive of more [158] than the *letter* of scripture, he is unable to conceive of the Church in any higher form or state, than at the utmost as merely *reconciled* or *earthly*. God, on the contrary, declares that eternal life is his *gift*; or that, independently of any *conditions* whatever performed or to be performed by the creature, the creature is *made passively a recipient of it*. To the view of salvation as *unconditionally* bestowed thus presented by God, the view of it as only capable of being enjoyed *conditionally*, which is taken by man, always and necessarily stand opposed: and opposed the two views must continue to be, until man and man's mind shall be no more.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Shall I be better understood, if I present the whole subject in the following brief manner?

Man limited; — therefore, conditional in his nature and views.

God unlimited; — therefore, independent of conditions altogether.

I am well aware that in this way *difference* properly, not *opposition*, is expressed. This arises from the want of human ideas on the subject, and the consequent imperfection of human language. Could I get a phraseology suitable to my purpose, it would be something like the following: —

Man, as included in God, necessarily limited; therefore, subject to conditions of existence.

God, as including all persons and things in himself, the being who limits; therefore, the source, arranger, and controller of all conditions of existence. See, in proof of this *opposition*, Acts 17:25-28; 1 Cor. 15:27, &c.

Let me not be assailed by the old and stale reproach, that the sentiments just developed are unfavourable to the interests of morality. Remember that the subject matter in question is, not *the present life* or any thing connected with it, but *life everlasting*. — In order, however, to pacify the apprehensions of fleshly sticklers for sound and good morals, (if such apprehensions be *really* entertained,) let them consider, and let them console themselves with the reflection, that even supposing my views to be prejudicial in the way insinuated, — which I most pointedly and indig-[159]nantly deny that they are, — they can never operate upon more than a very small, an infinitesimal, portion of the community. Calvinists are as much my bitter enemies, as are the lowest Arminians and Pelagians. The fleshly moralist, therefore, may always calculate upon having the vast majority of the human race with him. Men now, whether religious or irreligious, will always be influenced, as their predecessors before them have been, by a regard to their own selfish interests, real or fancied by the

laws of their country — by the opinions current in society — by the dictates of conscience, either more or less enlightened — and, in the last resort, by

The fear of Hell, that hangman's whip,  
To haul the wretch in order.

Therefore, let them dismiss all apprehensions on the score of my views being injurious to morals, whether these be real or pretended. Only the few, the very few, who, being set free by the Son of God, find themselves free indeed, John 8:36,<sup>66</sup> can think and feel with their fellow-members of the Heavenly Church. From sin, from condemnation, from death, as one with their Divine Head and as interested in his righteousness, justification, and life everlasting, they and they only know themselves, upon his own authority, to be completely and for ever liberated. 1 Cor. 15:22, 26-28, 47-49, 53,54,57; 1 Tim. 2:4,6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2, &c. &c. There is to them, as *walking not after the flesh* or as possessed of fleshly principles alone, *but after the spirit* or as possessed of the earnest of heavenly principle, *no condemnation*. Rom. 8:1. Also, 1 John 3:6. As partakers of the [160] life of Christ freely or unconditionally, and therefore certainly, bestowed upon them, 1 Cor. 15:49; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:11; that is, as already in possession of the earnest of eternal or necessarily present life;<sup>67</sup> dread as to a future state of existence is in their case a feeling altogether unknown. They know themselves to be in their Divine Head not merely *conquerors*, which they would have been had a bare restoration to Adam's original earthly state and circumstances been their lot, but *more than conquerors*<sup>68</sup> over every enemy, which they are as having had in Christ Jesus *earthly* principles superseded by and swallowed up in *heavenly* ones. True, the members of the heavenly church are still *in flesh*; and *in this capacity*, but not *as being one with Christ Jesus*, they are, subject to the restraints of law and rejoice to think that they are so. They know that their fleshly nature, as being essentially unrighteous, requires to be reined in, and can only be reined in by this expedient. 1 Tim. 1:8-11. Indeed, the very same earnest of the divine nature which sets them free from this present evil world, and from all dread whatever as to *life everlasting*, by their oneness with Christ, enforces upon them, with tenfold power, that yoke and authority of conscience as to *the life that now is* which they inherit as one with Adam. By the spirit or earnest of the divine nature, as a new and heavenly principle, they are, as dear children, *constrained* to love him *who died for them and rose again*, and who hath thereby shewn, that *he first loved them*: 2 Cor. 5:14,15: 1 John 4:19; [161] while by this same spirit throwing light even into the region of the soul or fleshly mind, and also operating as a self-denying principle in regard to human nature, they are *restrained* more and more from the evils to which flesh-and-blood or carnal mind, if left to itself, would carry them out. 1 Cor. 9:27. See also Gen. 39:9. Law, therefore, has and can have no influence over the divine nature of the child of God, or in reference to life everlasting; Gal. 5:22,23; but it exercises a most powerful and salutary influence over his human and unrighteous nature, or in reference to the life that now is.<sup>69</sup> 1 Tim. 1:8-10. But why enter upon this subject at all? A child of God understands already what I mean, by divine teaching and experience, and therefore needs not instructions from me. On the other hand, to a mere worldling, whether pious or profane, all my statements on the subject, however clearly and scripturally expressed, must be altogether unintelligible.

<sup>66</sup> Also, Rom. 6:6-11, 18-22.

<sup>67</sup> Exod. 3:14; Matt. 22:31,32, with Exod. 3:6; John 8:58; Ibid. 11:25,26, &c. &c.

<sup>68</sup> Υπερνικωμεν. Rom. 8:37. Macknight, after translating the word, correctly enough, *we do more than overcome*, has a most paltry paraphrase and note on the passage in which it occurs.

<sup>69</sup> The believer is not only in no respect whatever subject to Moses' Law as to his *divine nature*, but not even is his *human nature* subject to it. That law was obligatory only on the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. Having been fulfilled to the very uttermost by the Son of God, it came to an end in him. Rom. 10:4. But the very earnest of the divine mind in the child of God, which is the setting of himself free from law of every description, is what at the same time constitutes law to his flesh-and-blood nature. Or, enlightened to a far higher degree as to the demands of law than even the Jews were, by means of our Lord's sermon on the

Mount, Matt. 5-7, and otherwise, Rom. 13:8-10, he brings these his enlightened views to bear with all their force and intensity upon his Adamic nature, to which they constitute a law far more stringent and severe than mere fleshly moralists have any conception of. Talk of subjection to moral law! Stuff. We are not Jews. And, besides, Moses' law has been in all respects *abrogated*, by having been in all respects *fulfilled* by the Son of God. Matt. 5:18; Gal. 3:10-14; Coloss. 2:16,17. But as beings of flesh and blood, our knowledge of the truth, while as one with Christ it gives us *perfect* freedom from law, becomes to us as one with Adam a *perfect* law, far more rigid and unbending in its requirements than any that unregenerate Jew or Gentile ever felt himself subjected to.

[162]

## SECTION XI.

### FIFTH SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

#### NATURAL ORDER, THE WORLD IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND THE CHURCH IN THE SECOND; SPIRITUAL ORDER, THE CHURCH IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND THE WORLD IN THE SECOND.

When we set ourselves down to the perusal of the volume of inspiration, however carelessly the task may be performed, it cannot fail to strike us,

First, that the creation of Adam, and virtually of the whole world or human family in him, took place at the beginning of time; and,

Secondly, that the call of Abraham, one of Adam's descendants, and virtually of the whole fleshly church or body of favourites of Jehovah in a fleshly form in him, took place at a period long subsequent to that of the creation of man.

In the order of time, then, and in the order of the scriptures as they are literally constructed, the world or human family as a whole occupies the first place; and the fleshly church or selected portion of that world occupies the second. The progress naturally, in other words, is from the world to the church.

These, then, are scriptural facts, and, kept in their proper place, and made use of for their proper purposes, they are of the utmost value and importance. But, alas! [163] the human mind, ignorant of and incapable of comprehending any order of things except the *natural*, not content with employing that order in a legitimate manner, shews itself prone continually to apply it to ends and objects which are perfectly foreign to it. It is, according to man's ideas of the subject, not only the order in which God acts *naturally*, but also that in which he acts *supernaturally*. The world in their apprehensions must always stand first, and the church always second.

Unquestionably, God not only selected the fleshly church out of the world, but selected it for purposes in which the world, fleshly considered, has no concern. There is, upon the face of the matter, a *narrowing tendency* apparent in this part of the divine procedure. The divine regard, originally extended to mankind as a whole, is after the lapse of a few ages restricted to a portion of mankind only. Denial of this fact is out of the question. Indeed, so far from denying or even concealing it, my design is to place it before the minds of my readers as distinctly and prominently as possible.

It is not, then, in men's observing and maintaining the downward and narrowing progress apparent in the Old Testament Scriptures from the world to the church, or from the whole to the part, but in their inferences from and applications of this fact, that they grievously blunder. Because the whole world in flesh was narrowed down by God to a church, or part of that world in flesh, — that part having been elected or selected for purposes and for the enjoyment of privileges peculiar to itself, — therefore, it is concluded that the case of the church, spiritually considered, must be the same. "Out of mankind as a whole, God," say they, "must have chosen some, to whom alone [164] spiritual and everlasting

blessings are to be restricted." This is particularly remarkable in the case of Calvinists. Assuming, without any hesitation, the natural or narrowing system as the basis of their creed, they broadly and openly frame their doctrine of election according to it: maintaining, and that sometimes too in a manner the most offensive, that as God confined the enjoyment of religious privileges and the land of Canaan to the Israelites of old, so to the spiritual Israel does he concede blessings, in which the rest of the human family are destined never to participate. That is, it is the import of their doctrine to maintain, that the election of the spiritual church is an end, and not a means to an end. With Calvinists, at bottom, although with considerable variations of statement, almost all other sects concur. Arminians, Baxterians, Lutherans, the Church of England with its distinction between the sufficiency of the atonement for all and its efficiency only in the case of a part, and though last not least the Plymouth Brethren, notwithstanding that they all profess to regard Christ as having in one way or other died for the sins of the whole world, all contrive to make the number of those ultimately saved smaller than the number of those actually redeemed: thereby shewing, that in their sentiments with regard to this subject they are guided by the mere letter, and consequently by mere fleshly views of the word of God. Heavenly benefits offered to many, always with them terminate in such benefits enjoyed by a few. None of the authors, and none of the distinguished supporters, of such systems have been able to elevate themselves above the *narrowing* sense and tendency of election. There is always with them, first, a fleshly whole; but this whole invariably dwindles down to a fleshly part of that whole.

[165] Observe, I am now speaking of spiritual blessings to be enjoyed in a *higher state of existence*, and of the *narrowing* system as applied to them. For, by a tendency to look forward to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings *upon earth by the many*, fleshly systems of religion are as we have seen abundantly characterised.

We are now furnished with a very simple test, and one capable of easy application, by which to try the origin and nature of all religious systems which profess to treat of election and the church of God in a spiritual and supernatural point of view. According to the letter of scripture, the progress was from *the whole to a part*. The human family, viewed as possessing common advantages in Adam, became narrowed to a portion of that family, viewed as possessing peculiar advantages in Abraham. In this we behold a beautiful adaptation of God's word, in its literal meaning and import, to the natural structure of the human mind. Man is a selfish, and thereby a narrowing and restrictive being. One of his leading and most remarkable propensities is, not to be contented with the enjoyment of advantages common to himself with others, but if possible to grasp at and retain exclusive privileges. He aims continually at rising in the world, and surpassing his fellow-men in wealth, abilities, or station. Hence, in perusing God's narrative of his natural dealings with the human race, — especially, of his superadding to the common benefits enjoyed by man, peculiar privileges in the case of the favoured nation, — the reader can experience no difficulty whatever in comprehending a system, thus perfectly accommodated to one of the first, the strongest, and the most indomitable propensities of the human mind. But man is destitute of all that is spiritual and heavenly, both [166] in principle and conception, as he comes into the world; and therefore, if he attempt to construct a system of spiritual election and a heavenly church, he must do so on the principles with which alone he is familiar, and out of the elements which alone he is capable of apprehending. He must found his theory on the *letter* of scripture, at the utmost. He must, first of all, take as his basis the whole human race, and some advantage or advantages enjoyed by them in common; and then he must bring into view his church or body of selected and favoured ones, and must represent peculiar and exclusive privileges as their portion. He must have his *whole* redeemed by Christ; and yet his *part* alone ultimately saved. He cannot do otherwise. To descend from a whole to a part in any subject is easy for fleshly mind; to ascend from a part to a whole, whatever it may be in other matters, is in divine things, for fleshly mind, absolutely impossible. Give me, then, the theory of religion which it is intended to try. Say, does it, after professing to view mankind as naturally possessed of advantages in common, such as redemption for instance, pretend to restrict the enjoyment of

advantages supernaturally, such as ultimate salvation, to a small number of mankind only? If so, I have enough to enable me to judge. No farther investigation is required to satisfy me that such a theory is, as to one of its main features, a product of natural or fleshly mind.

Fleshly mind, however, does not go far enough upon its own principles. Were even the letter of scripture better observed and understood by it than it appears to be, God would be seen carrying out the *narrowing* and *exclusive* system to its greatest possible extent. If from the family [167] of man, as a whole, he selected a part to be the recipients and depositaries of special blessings and privileges; from that part he selected one to be the recipient and depository of blessings and privileges still more special. Election, in its fleshly bearings and tendencies, does not terminate with God's choice of the nation of Israel. On the contrary, it runs down until it finds its fitting termination in a single individual, Jesus of Nazareth alone. He was, *par excellence* and exclusively, *God's servant whom he upheld, God's elect in whom his soul delighted*. Isa. 42:1. Also Matt. 12:18. God had imposed one law upon the whole family of man, in the person of their creature head; Gen. 2:16,17; and by them, in his one transgression, that law had been violated. Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21,22. He had then imposed a great number and variety of laws *in the letter* upon the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh; Exod., *throughout, &c., &c.*; and by them, likewise, every one of these laws had been violated, Isa. 1, *throughout*; Rom. 3:10-19; Ibid. 5:20; Acts 7:53, &c. At last, upon a single person who appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, who was Son of God as well as son of man, who was both *the man and the Jew*, — was law imposed by God, to its full extent and in the utmost strictness of its requirements: from him it exacted not only a complete *external*, but also a complete *internal* obedience; *compare* Psalm 40:8, *with* Rom. 7:14; and that obedience having been rendered by him, the demands of law were thereby completely exhausted, or, to avail myself of the apostolic phrase, he thereby became *the end of the law for righteousness*. Rom. 10:4. Now the Lord Jesus, he who thus obeyed and exhausted law, was, be it remembered, the elect [168] one — the only elect one, in that peculiar sense which belongs to himself exclusively. And as the only obedient, as well as the only elect one, to him alone therefore, as a matter of right, salvation and life everlasting belong. Philip. 2:8,9. — And what, upon natural principles, is the fair conclusion from all this? That the family of man, as a whole, had any claim to salvation in themselves? Certainly not: for they had shewn themselves in Adam's one transgression, and in their own personal violations of conscience homologating that act of his,<sup>70</sup> unworthy of even *retaining* the life that now is; and if so, *much more* unworthy surely of *obtaining* life everlasting. Is the conclusion, then, that the fleshly church or natural election of God had a right in itself to salvation and life everlasting? Just as certainly not: for its members had broken all the conditions, upon fulfilment of which alone they could have been entitled to *continue* the church of God upon earth; and if so, much less surely could they prefer a claim to be elevated to the dignity of becoming the church of God in its heavenly and glorified state.<sup>71</sup> What then is the legitimate, indeed the only and necessary conclusion, upon which men conversant with the letter of scripture alone, and with the history and progress of natural election as therein detailed, are forced? Why [169] this: — that Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah or Christ, was God's *only* elect one; that he had acquired the sole and exclusive right to the enjoyment of salvation and life everlasting; and that no human being, whether Jew or Gentile, as being involved in transgression and therefore deserving not reward but punishment, could prefer the slightest claim, or maintain the slenderest right, to participate with him in his heavenly and dearly-earned privileges. Thus it is that, following out the *narrowing* system of human nature, and the progressively *narrowing* system of the letter of scripture as connected therewith and accommodated thereto, we land ourselves, not in the ultimate salvation of *a few*, but actually in the ultimate salvation *only of one*.

<sup>70</sup> Laying the foundation, by the way, of another irresistible *à fortiori* argument, viz., if human beings are incapable of obeying even the law of conscience, or a law imposed by each individual upon himself, Rom. 2:15; 3:19; how much less capable, consequently, must they be of obeying the pure, holy, and uncompromising law of God. If man, as is plain, cannot keep even the former, it is a mere work of

supererogation to set about investigating as to his ability to keep the latter.

<sup>71</sup> They had shewn themselves unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, (of fleshly privileges,) and how then could they expect to be entrusted with the true riches? Luke 16:11.

At this point comes in the doctrine of *inverse* or *opposite order*, that *divine* and *divinely revealed* principle which it is my grand object in this present work to illustrate.

If it be the principle of the natural or fleshly order of things to begin with the human family as a whole; — to descend from them to a portion of that family, constituted into a fleshly church; — and from this church to descend still lower to a single individual: then, if the order of things when divine be *inverse* or *opposite*, that order must begin with a single individual, — must ascend from him to a selected body of individuals or church, — and from this elect body must ascend ultimately to all. If the natural system, beginning with an apparently broad basis, ultimately taper to a point, the divine system, beginning with a point, must so expand as ultimately to embrace or take in the whole.

Even *prima facie*, or at the first blush, the system now suggested, to which we have given the appellation *divine*, [170] carries evidence of its truth upon the very surface. If human nature be *selfish* and therefore *narrowing*, the divine nature is *generous* and therefore *expanding*. Man takes; God gives. God's blessedness, his very nature indeed, consists in giving, not in receiving. Acts 20:35.<sup>72</sup> Hence, if man aim at the enjoyment of exclusive privileges, under the influence of his native selfishness; John 8:33,39; Acts 22:21,22; God, whose nature is the very opposite of that of man, will aim at the ultimate conferring of benefits in which all may participate, under the influence of his unbounded generosity. Psalm 145:9,16. Who will venture to say, that this conclusion is inconsistent with God's revealed character? And if agreeable thereto, what is it but a statement in other terms of that divine progression from benefits conferred upon an individual to benefits conferred upon all, which, in the last paragraph, I have hinted at as necessarily involved in the doctrine of divine inversion, or of the opposition of what is divine to what is human?

<sup>72</sup> Alluding, perhaps, to Matt. 20:28. Query: Is the adjective *πολλῶν*, in this passage of Matthew, necessarily to be taken along with the substantive *αὐθρωπῶν*? May not *λυτρῶν*, or *θυσιῶν* rather, be the noun requiring to be supplied? According to our version, — rather, according to the common interpretation, — the Son of Man was to *give his life a ransom for many men*. Is it not, on the contrary, our Lord's meaning, that he was *to give his life a ransom*, that is, a substantial and antitypical ransom, *avtī, instead of the many* shadowy or typical ransoms offered under the law? See 1 Tim. 2:6, *in the Greek*. The doctrine which I suggest is at all events most conformable to that laid down in Heb. 10:1-14; especially verses 10th and 12th. For the view now given, I am indebted to my friend, John Hamilton, Esq., of St. Ernan's, County Donegal, Ireland.

But, all reasoning apart, the following facts, broadly and unequivocally embodying my principle, are set before us in the New Testament Scriptures.

1. That Jesus rose from the dead, to the power of an [171] endless life, a single individual. John 20, *throughout*; Col. 1:18. As in him alone, by his death, the old creation had ended; so in him alone, by his resurrection from the dead, the new creation began. Rev. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:4,5. He had *trodden the wine-press of divine wrath alone, of the people none having been with him*. Isa. 63:3. And so, that *in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, Col. 1:18, without having any human participator in the majesty of his triumph, alone he rose from the dead; Matt. 28:1; Acts 2:32; and alone he ascended to take possession of endless life and glory in the heavens. Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9-11. This was nothing but his due. For he alone, of all the descendants of Adam, had acquired a right to demand admission into the heavenly world on the footing of his own perfect righteousness. Psalm 24:3, *to the end*; Isa. 53, *throughout*; Philip. 2:8,9. Without any one at first to share it with him, he sat down on his throne *on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens*. Heb. 8:1, *compared with Psalm 2:6*. But,

2. He sat not down upon his throne, to occupy it for ever in solitary grandeur. The purpose of his

Father and himself was, that others should partake of his dignity along with him. Matt. 20:23; John 17:22,24; Rev. 3:21. Not the whole family of man, but a certain number selected from among them, in the divine purpose, before time began. Rom. 8:29,30; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Pet. 1:2. These he had *chosen out of the world*, John 15:16,19, as the Israel of God or antitype of the fleshly church, Gal. 6:16, *with* Ibid. 3:29, that, as his heavenly church, they might with him *inherit the heavenly kingdom*. Matt. 25:34. This enjoyment of his kingdom [172] with him on the part of the church did not, however, take place immediately. During the period of forty years which intervened between his ascension and his coming again to render his believing church like himself, Heb. 3:6, *to the end*; 4:1-11; and 9:28, and to execute the threatened vengeance upon the unbelieving and earthly one, Ibid. 10:25-31; Jude 14,15, he himself, in his ascension or heavenly form, was occupying the throne alone. He was engaged, during the whole of that period, in *reconciling* the church in its earthly form to himself through his death, and thereby in preparing it for being *saved* at the proper time by his life. Rom. 5:10. See also Philip. 3:10-14. Neither David, nor any of the other deceased members of the church in its earthly form, had during these forty years the privilege conceded to them of *ascending to the heavens*. Acts 2:34. But at its close the heavenly Bridegroom made his appearance, to take home to him his bride, the church, rendering her then heavenly like himself. Matt. 25:6; Rev. 19:7-9.<sup>73</sup> And since that period, Christ with his previously reconciled ones now advanced to their saved or heavenly state, and with their offspring clothed upon with a new form of existence and rendered heavenly like themselves, has been occupying his throne. Rom. 5:7-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 3:21; Ibid. 20:6. See also 1 Cor. 15:53,54.

<sup>73</sup> I have a strong conviction, that 1 Thess. 4:13-17, has a reference to the same period; at all events, the circumstances spoken of in that passage then *began to receive* their accomplishment.

3. This last state of things, however exalted, is nevertheless merely preliminary to the highest state of all. So far from being itself the end, it is merely subservient to [173] that end. That end in due time cometh. And then the kingdom is to be delivered up to the Father. 1 Cor. 15:24. To explain myself. All previous manifestations of the divine character, after the lapse of ages and after having served their purpose, are destined to merge in the highest and the greatest manifestation of all. And the kingdom, after having accomplished its end of ultimate and complete subjugation of all enemies, is, like every thing else that is merely subservient and subsidiary, to expire. God is to become, — nay, let me correct myself, is to be revealed as what he is, — *all in all*. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. As sonship in flesh merged, at the period of our Lord's resurrection, in sonship in Spirit; Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:32,33; so is sonship in Spirit to merge ultimately in the *all in all* character of Jehovah. 1 Cor. 15:28. And this, in virtue of a divine fact, the truth of which is declared by the Lord Jesus himself: — *I and my Father are one*. John 10:30. When this blessed consummation of the revelation of God in his *all in all* character shall have taken place, a new creation, exhibited first in the resurrection of Christ alone, and secondly in the resurrection of his church, shall then be carried out in the fulness of its extent and efficiency to all. *All things*, and consequently all persons as included in this general and unqualified phrase, *shall then be made new*. Rev. 21:5. The whole creation, now *subject to vanity* and *groaning under the bondage of corruption*, shall then *be delivered from* this state by being introduced *into the glorious liberty* previously enjoyed by the *children of God*. Rom. 8: 19-22. All enemies, not excepting death itself the last of them, under the iron hand of which the unregenerate shall up to that period have been held, shall [174] then be destroyed. 1 Cor. 15:26,54. In a word, God shall then be *all in all*; or he who formerly, during the mediatorial period and as Son of God, had appeared as the saviour of *them that believe*, shall then, putting on his grandest characteristic attributes and manifesting himself as the only living and true God, appear as the Saviour of *the whole human race*. 1 Tim. 4:10. See also Ibid. 2:4,6.

Prosecuting our inquiries into scripture by tracing its New Testament revelations, we thus discover, as a matter of fact, that divine manifestation is a gradually expansive principle; and that the divine nature, in its mode of communication to creatures, is a gradually expansive nature. Instead of *narrowing* or being delighted with conferring or enjoying exclusive privileges, as the human mind is,

God's mind, although it may begin with a small manifestation of itself and one thereby adapted to the existing circumstances of the creature, cannot stop until all that is *narrow, selfish, and exclusive* is swallowed up in a manifestation of itself which is *unbounded and universal*. The divine mind is, when sown in the minds of men, the true grain of mustard seed, which although at first the least of all seeds, yet when it is grown expands into the greatest among herbs, becoming a tree in the branches of which the birds of the air come and take up their abode. Matthew 13:31,32. In the preceding abridgement of facts relating to the rise, progress, and consummation of the Messiah's kingdom, which I have extracted from the word of God, there is evinced to us the diametrical opposition, along with an admitted parallelism, subsisting between the order of things which is agreeable to human mind, and that which is agreeable to divine mind. The [175] two orders of things stand inversely or in opposition to each other. We have first, naturally, the human race as a whole upon earth, contrasted supernaturally with Christ as a single individual elevated to heaven. We have secondly, naturally, a certain number of the human race selected to be God's church upon earth, contrasted supernaturally with a certain number of individuals selected to be God's church in the heavenly state. And we have thirdly and lastly, naturally, the Messiah in flesh, a single individual in whom human nature appears contracted to its utmost possible degree of limitation, contrasted supernaturally with all who have ever lived, new created in the Messiah as God, or in his all in all character, and thereby made heavenly like himself: a state of things into which the divine nature having run up appears in its highest and most glorious degree of expansion. Human nature as a whole, through the *narrowing* process of fleshly election, tapers down to *a point* in the person of the Messiah *in flesh*; on the contrary, the divine nature, revealed first in the single person of the Messiah in *Spirit*, — a mere *point* as it were, — expands, through the medium of spiritual election, into a vastness and unboundedness of manifestation which ultimately embraces all.

There is suggested in the last paragraph, notwithstanding their apparent sameness, the fact of a real difference or rather opposition subsisting between the election of the fleshly church of Israel and the election of the spiritual church of the living God, of which it may be proper as well as useful to take some passing notice. Both churches, the fleshly and the spiritual, consist equally of a limited number of individuals. As we have already seen in section ninth, a few comparatively speaking, constituted [176] the external church of Israel upon earth, before the coming of the Messiah, and but few of these even after his advent, entered through him the strait gate into the reconciled state; so also, now that the church is internal, heavenly, and saved, there are but few of the children of men who, while dwelling in cottages of clay, are in virtue of God's sovereign purpose and renewing efficacy introduced into it. So far, there is a striking analogy between the two churches. The points of contrast, however, between the natural election and the spiritual election are not less striking and important. The natural election was to the enjoyment of earthly privileges; the spiritual election is to possess here the earnest, and hereafter the fulness, of heavenly ones. The natural election was part of a narrowing process; the spiritual election is part of a widening one. Let me confine myself to this last distinction, as that with which we are more immediately concerned. In choosing the people of Israel to be to him a peculiar people, God was preparing matters for still further contracting his electing grace, by choosing his own Son, a single individual, to be the sole depository of his love because the sole fulfiller of his purposes upon earth; Isaiah 42:1; whereas, in choosing the members of his spiritual church, his object was that he might thereby obtain the means of extending and expanding the manifestation of his love, or that he might, through his spiritually elected ones, acquire the opportunity of ultimately bestowing eternal life upon all in the heavenly state. The two elections, the earthly and the spiritual, agree in this, that they are the conferring of peculiar privileges upon a limited number of individuals. But they stand opposed as to the object immediately thereby aimed at and realized: in the [177] one case, as in that of the fleshly Israel, election of a church having been essentially *narrowing*, by having been subservient immediately to the election of an individual; in the other case, or in that of the heavenly Israel, election of a church being essentially *expansive*, by being subservient immediately to the divine blessing resting ultimately upon

all.

This complete opposition of the tendency, purpose, and issue of fleshly election on the one hand, and of spiritual election on the other, has never yet, that I am aware of, been brought distinctly under public notice. And this, notwithstanding that a knowledge of it is indispensable to the spiritual, that is, the true understanding of scripture. Every sect, whose tenets I am acquainted with,<sup>74</sup> makes the object of God in both species of election to be the same. Hence, in both of them God is represented as *limiting* his love, that is, *limiting* himself.<sup>75</sup> If what I have just said be understood, it is evident that while in fleshly election God's direct purpose was to narrow, confine, or restrict, in spiritual election his direct purpose was the very reverse — his aim having been thereby to open up the way for the most expansive and universal manifestation of himself possible, by the new creation of all things and persons in himself.

<sup>74</sup> Except, perhaps, the Universalists. Hints agreeable to the view given in the text are to be found in the writings of Elhanan Winchester; and much more decidedly in those of Jeremiah White. Still, from not having clearly comprehended the doctrine of divine inversion, these worthy men have been unable to express themselves distinctly on the subject.

<sup>75</sup> John 4:8,16. *God is love.*

I may observe further, that the vast difference between God's real purposes towards man, and those which he is represented by fleshly millennialists as cherishing, becomes, [178] through the understanding of this subject, perfectly apparent. In Section IX. we found it supposed by many ordinary religious characters, that God intended, at some future period of this present world, to bestow blessings of a spiritual kind upon the great majority of the human race while in flesh. This notion we combated as fleshly, absurd, and unscriptural. But, glorious truth! ultimately new-creating all human beings and transforming them into his own likeness, not on earth but in heaven, God there destines for them the full and everlasting enjoyment of himself. His object is, not to make earth and an earthly state of things desirable, by an incongruous and indeed impossible<sup>76</sup> admixture of flesh and spirit; but exhibiting more and more earth and earthly things in all their vileness, worthlessness, and deformity, even when carried out to the highest pitch of perfection of which they are susceptible, ultimately to supersede altogether the earthly state by the heavenly one. God is not going to perpetuate and perfect, as is supposed by such dreamers, *the image of the earthly*; but is going to bestow upon those who now *bear the image of the earthly*, hereafter *the image of the heavenly*.<sup>77</sup> Hence, while carnal millennialists indulge themselves in the imaginary prospect of a future perfection of members of the human race in flesh; we who know the truth rejoice in the certain prospect held out to us in God's Word of a real and ultimate perfection of the whole human race, not on earth, but by their being taken out of the earthly state altogether; and this in consequence of their being *made new* in Jesus, in his *all in all* or complete heavenly character.

<sup>76</sup> Rom. 7:15,16,23; Gal. 5:17.

<sup>77</sup> 1 Cor. 15:49.

[179] Fleshly and spiritual mind, on this subject as well as on every other in which spiritual views are involved, come into collision. The human mind can anticipate and delight in the prospect of a supposed spiritual perfection of man *upon earth*, which God declares can never take place; while it rejects with abhorrence that real spiritual perfection of all human beings ultimately *in heaven*, which constitutes the grand subject-matter of divine revelation. Thus perfection in flesh, its own notion, man can understand and relish; perfection in spirit, God's doctrine, it hates and opposes: or in this way as in every other man's mind stands opposed to God's mind. Delightful is it, however, for spiritual mind to receive and acquiesce in spiritual and spiritually-revealed truths, even at the expense of manifesting thereby its opposition to fleshly mind. Among other truths of this sort, spiritual mind knows that the members of the spiritual election of God are destined to be, till the end of time, a small and despised body *upon earth*; and yet it knows likewise that this small and despised body shall continue to reign

here and hereafter with their glorified head, — himself despised and rejected of men while he was a sojourner upon earth, — till, ultimately, in concert with him with whom they are one, they shall *in heaven* subdue and conform to the divine nature every foe. Psalm 110:1,2; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 3:21; Ibid. 21:5.

The substance of what precedes in this section, may be represented to the eye in the following manner: —

I. Natural Order.

1

2

All mankind in flesh.—

A part of mankind in flesh.—

3

Christ in flesh.

[180]

II. Spiritual Order.

3

2

All mankind in spirit.—

A part of mankind in spirit.—

1

Christ in spirit.

Or,

I. Natural Order.

1

2

All intelligent beings upon earth.— A part of intelligent beings upon earth.—

3

Christ upon earth.

II. Spiritual Order.

1

2

Christ in heaven.— A part of intelligent beings in heaven.—

3

All intelligent beings in heaven.

Observe that the natural order is the reverse of the spiritual order; or that the procedure of God in nature stands exactly and diametrically opposed to his procedure in grace. In the former, the progress is from the whole to one; in the latter, from one to the whole.

There is a beautiful analogy subsisting between Adam, as the only source out of whom intelligent beings naturally seem to spring, and Jesus glorified, as the only source from whom the same intelligent beings supernaturally derive their origin. Indeed, so very important is this analogy, that upon it some of the most instructive, valuable, and consolatory doctrines of scripture rest as their appropriate foundation. See Rom. 5:12, *to the end*; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; 47-49, &c., &c. And yet, even here, *analog*y cannot be considered apart from *inversion* or *opposition*. Human beings who seem to spring naturally

from Adam, in reality spring even naturally from Christ in flesh. Without contradicting the fact that all men [181] naturally appear to derive their existence from Adam, and that all of them in a limited sense actually do so, nevertheless the scriptures, by shewing us that *in God we live, move, and have our being*, Acts 17:28; that Jesus was *God manifest in flesh*, 1 Tim. 3:16; and that in the Son of God, or God in his mediatorial capacity, *all things consist*, Coloss. 1:14-17, shew us the additional, and however much at first sight puzzling yet in reality not contradictory fact, that all human beings naturally, no less than supernaturally, were summed up in Christ Jesus, — deriving consequently their natural no less than their supernatural existence from him. That is, out of Jesus *in flesh*, creating *backwards* as it were, all mankind in their fleshly form were taken; just as, out of Jesus *in spirit*, creating *forwards* as it were, the same beings in their spiritual form are taken. Let me correct myself. Properly speaking, no beings ever were *out of* Jesus. In him they lived, while in flesh; in him they live, now that they are elevated to the possession of spirit. Col. 1:17; *indeed, see the whole context*. Accordingly, although to men looking cursorily and with unenlightened minds at the subject, the human race appear to proceed one after another *only* from the creature Adam; yet, on the other hand, by a mind more profoundly because divinely taught, they are seen to have in reality one after another proceeded from, and to have been manifestations of, the Creator, the Lord Jesus. By such a divinely taught mind, Jesus is seen to have thrown out of himself, as it were, centuries before his own appearance in flesh, Adam his creature representative; Rom. 5:14; and, in subsequent ages, a succession of beings inheriting the nature, bearing the image, and subject to the fate of that representative; [182] Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:48; until at last he himself came in flesh, manifesting himself to be the person to whom all who preceded him had borne a resemblance, and out of whom they had all in reality and in succession emanated. Just as, now that he is exalted to glory, he is seen by the same mind bringing out of himself again in succession the same beings in a glorified form, and bearing a glorified image corresponding to his own. 1 Cor. 15:49. Backwardly, Jesus manifest in flesh operated in producing a series of beings in flesh conformed to his own earthly appearance; just as forwardly, manifest in spirit he operates in producing the same series of beings in spirit conformed to his own heavenly appearance. In other words, it was not a creature who really produced beings in flesh, and the Creator who produced beings in spirit; but it is the Creator, in his twofold manifestation in flesh and spirit, who really produces both the one and the other. Jesus in flesh and Jesus in spirit is the *one* source of all intelligent beings, in the *two* opposite forms in which they make their appearance: they, whether in their *fleshly* or in their *spiritual* form, being equally *in him*. The whole human family in flesh, through the medium of the church in flesh, *appear* to run down into Christ in flesh as their *end*; whereas *in reality* this is merely, in the inverted order, a manifestation of all human beings having proceeded from, as well as of their being contained in, Christ in flesh as their *beginning*.<sup>78</sup> Just as the *inverted* or fleshly order having answered its purpose and been set aside, Jesus appears now in the *direct* or heavenly order, (*inverted*, nevertheless, to fleshly mind,) evolving or bringing all glorified beings *out of* him-[183]self, and yet shewing that as they ever have been, so must they ever continue to be, *in himself*. — The secret of all which is, that Jesus is both man and God: properly speaking, the only and the true man, as he is the only and the true God.

<sup>78</sup> That is, Jesus is *Alpha* as well as *Omega*. Rev. 1:8.

The subject treated of throughout this section, namely, that in order of nature the world precedes the church, but in order of grace the church precedes the world, is closely related to, indeed is identified with one of the circumstances to which I am indebted for my acquaintance with the doctrine of Divine Inversion. It was by having had obtruded on my notice the fact that, although in the order of nature Adam appeared before Abraham, yet in the order of grace the manifestation of Jesus as spiritual Abraham takes place before his manifestation as spiritual Adam, that my mind opened to the understanding of this important feature of the system of divine revelation. Naturally it was evident, that the whole of the human race as one with the earthly Adam preceded a portion of that race as one with the earthly Abraham, or that the whole preceded the part; but supernaturally, or when I was enabled to

rise to the contemplation of Jesus glorified, I found him in the first instance bringing only a small portion of the human family to bear his heavenly image or manifesting himself to be the true Abraham, in subserviency to his conforming all intelligent beings ultimately to himself or appearing as the true Adam; that is, I found the part preceding the whole. The order of persons human, and the order of persons divine, were thus found by me to stand in an inverse or opposite relation the one to the other. A discovery which resulted both in a conviction of the truth of the general principle which it is the grand object of this essay to enforce, and also in a satisfactory [184] view of that wherein the gospel or glad tidings consists, as well as of the true and spiritual mode of bringing it under the notice of others. A few remarks on the latter topic, which is inseparably connected with the doctrine of this section, may not be unacceptable, and may besides contribute to throw farther light upon my meaning.

What, then, is the gospel? And how, when the opportunity may be vouchsafed to us, ought we to bring it under the notice of our fellow men?

In the first place, the gospel is merely a manifestation to the few who are taught from above of the fact, that they have, — not *may have* or *will have*, but that *they have* — divine righteousness and divine life in Jesus as second Adam glorified, or Christ; 1 Cor. 15:22, with Acts 2:36; just as certainly as that they inherit sin and death in the first Adam or man of the earth, earthly. Rom. 5:12, *to the end*. They are not called upon to reason from any thing found in themselves to the conclusion that they are heirs of the divine favour; nor does God by any secret or mysterious whisper announce to them that they have a destiny or possess a character different from that of others around them. No certainly. What is made known to them is a fact — a public and divinely attested fact. The fact is, that they are one with Jesus the second man, just as decidedly and certainly as they are one with Adam the first. The subject matter of this fact, too, is a benefit not peculiar to themselves, but shared by them in common with every other human being: for, if they are one with Jesus, so are all besides. As there is no difference between them and the rest of mankind, viewed as connected naturally with the first Adam, of the earth, earthly; Rom. 3:22; so is there no difference between them and the rest of mankind, viewed as connected super-[185]naturally with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. 15:21,22. And their possession of this common benefit they know upon the authority of God's word. *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ* (or the second Adam glorified, Acts 2:36,) *shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. 15:22; see also Rom. 5:18; 11:32. But the knowledge of their possession of righteousness and life everlasting in Christ Jesus, the second Adam, as a divine matter of fact and therefore of absolute certainty, is revealed to few while sojourners here below. Many profess to think that the ultimate salvation of all would be delightful *if true*; and others endeavour to *reason themselves into* a conviction of its truth by dint of mere human arguments. Neither of these two classes, of course, enjoy divine certainty as to the future new-creation and consequent salvation of all. And while many are thus dubious about the final result, by far the great majority of religious professors positively, pointedly, and even indignantly deny the possibility of those who die unregenerate here being saved hereafter. By a few, and a few only, is the new-creation, and consequent salvation, of all human beings in Christ Jesus known and rejoiced in as a fact. A fact divinely true, because divinely revealed. Rev. 21:5. In the minds of such, recognising Jesus as spiritual Adam and themselves consequently as one with him, there is, of course, to themselves the absolute certainty of the enjoyment of life everlasting.<sup>79</sup> Not to them in his character of spiritual Adam, however, does he reveal the fact that he is so. On the contrary, he is made known to the church as [186] spiritual Adam, by himself in his character of spiritual Abraham. Ephes. 1:3-11, particularly verse 10. It is made manifest that he is *one with all*, not during the time state *to all* but only to *a few*. Now although it is true that he is revealed to these few as *Adam*, yet the revelation to them takes place by himself as *Abraham*. Them and them only does he now *beget with the word of truth, that they should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.* James 1:18; also Rev. 14:4. That is, without doubt he reveals himself to his church as spiritual Adam, or shews to its members that he certainly and everlastingly stands *to them* in a spiritual relation, because he stands in the same relation *to all*; and yet in the very fact of his *confining* this

revelation of himself as spiritual Adam at present *to them*, does he appear acting in the character and capacity of spiritual Abraham. When ultimately he manifests himself as spiritual Adam *to all*, he is then revealed as spiritual Adam by himself in his capacity as spiritual Adam. But while in this time state he is revealed as spiritual Adam only to *a part*, he acts in his restricted capacity as spiritual Abraham. The fact of Jesus being spiritual Adam is thus in reality the gospel, and *the ground* of that absolute certainty of eternal life which it is the privilege of the members of the spiritual church to possess; the fact of Jesus being spiritual Abraham again is *the reason* of the members of the spiritual church having conferred upon them this certainty. As spiritual Abraham he makes known to them, and to them only, that he is spiritual Adam. Knowing that he is *one with all*, they know that he is *one with them*; but they know that he is *one with all* and *one with them*, by means of the information which, while they are in [187] flesh, he is pleased to convey to them alone and exclusively to this effect. This suggests to us,

<sup>79</sup> The *present* enjoyment: for *eternal life* is *present life*. Jesus is the *I am*; John 8:58: and his I am, everlastingly present and unchangeable or divine life is that the earnest of the enjoyment of which he bestows upon the members of his heavenly church, even while they are in flesh. John 11:25,26.

In the second place, the proper method of bringing the gospel under the notice of others. It is to declare as a matter of fact, that all have righteousness and life in Jesus as Christ or second Adam glorified, just as all have sin and death in the first or earthly Adam; and to set forth in order the scriptural evidences of this simple and animating proposition. There should be no commands, exhortations, or entreaties to believe this fact; and there should be no denunciation of terrors in the event of a conviction of its truth failing to take possession of the mind. Both commands and threats are at variance with the gospel. At all events, however consistent they might be with the gospel when proclaimed as *the law which went forth out of Zion* to the church in its *reconciled* state, they are contradictory to that gospel as a bare proclamation of blessings freely bestowed upon the church in its saved state. Commands to believe tend to strengthen and deepen the impression, so natural to the mind of the creature, that he must perform something in order to ensure his own salvation, in opposition to the fact of the work of salvation having been completed, John 19:30, and being revealed as completed, Rom. 10:4, by the Lord Jesus; and threats contradict the gospel to fleshly mind, by representing it necessarily as an expression of divine wrath, and not as it is in reality an exhibition of divine love. And also election should not, except in the way of the refutation of error, be spoken of and insisted on to those who are ignorant of the truth. Election is a doctrine which belongs to the church, and not to the world. God will manifest who are his elect ones, by bestowing [188] upon them and upon them only, while they are upon earth, in his own time and way, the knowledge of himself. It is enough to state to the world the simple fact, "men *are* saved in Christ Jesus with an everlasting salvation, whether they know it or not." To the statement of this to the world, whenever a suitable opportunity may occur, let the children of God confine themselves; and to God be left the glory, as to him belongs exclusively the prerogative, of bringing his church, by the carrying of this truth home to the consciences of its members, out of the world. He is spiritual Abraham or Saviour of his church; and as such he alone is competent to satisfy any that he is also spiritual Adam or Saviour of all. 1 Tim. 4:10.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Understanding the views insisted on throughout this section, what a beauty, force, and applicability have the following words of John Barclay, which I have selected as the motto of the fifth chapter of my *Assurance of Faith*: — "I cannot allow any evidence of the world's creation by ONE, whom the scripture alone describes and calls JEHOVAH, and of man's creation in his image — or of the fall — of the law — of sin, — of death as the wages thereof, — of Christ — of judgment — of heaven — or of hell, but only that equal and infallible evidence thereof which God affords me in his word. To me, the word of God is good for all, or good for nothing at all. If sufficient to *charge* my conscience with sin and death, so also in like manner to *discharge* my conscience from both. If I am told, that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; am I not also and in the same breath told, that by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous? If I am assured, that by nature all men were equally children of wrath, am I not equally assured, that by faith all who believe are now the children of God? For it is written, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. (1

John 5:1.) Wherefore, I cannot believe that Jesus is the Christ, without believing as certainly that I am born of God; unless, indeed, I believe God to be a liar in the latter clause of the sentence, whom I hold to be true in the former. His WORD IS **EQUALLY PLEDGED TO ME FOR BOTH. WITHOUT THE WORD, IT IS AS HARD TO ACCOUNT FOR THE ONE AS THE OTHER. WITHOUT THE WORD, WE KNOW NOTHING OF EITHER. IF YOU ADMIT THE WORD, BOTH ARE EQUALLY CERTAIN.**" — Barclay's *Assurance of Faith Vindicated*. The pious and heavenly-minded author of this passage was himself ignorant of the full extent of the value of his own statements, from his having been ignorant of the distinction between Jesus as spiritual Abraham and spiritual Adam. Had he known this, he would have found his argument materially strengthened: it being impossible for us to credit, on divine authority, a certain set of consequences as attaching to us from our connexion with one Adam, without, on the same authority, believing in another set of consequences as attaching to us equally from our connexion with another Adam. Barclay saw Jesus only in his character of second or spiritual Abraham. Hence, he was unable to do full justice to his own magnificent idea. It is only by having had Jesus revealed to us as the second Adam that we can experience in our consciences that complete swallowing up of sin and death in righteousness and life everlasting, which constitutes the grand privilege of the specially redeemed.

[189] Glorious and animating, to those who have been rendered partakers of the earnest of the heavenly mind of Christ, is the doctrine which has occupied our attention in this section. Not so, however, can it be felt to be by mere fleshly mind. This will, this must, insist upon things always following their natural order. From mankind as a whole a fleshly church was taken, to the exclusion from earthly religious privileges of those from among whom the selection was made; therefore, argues the carnal mind, if there be election of a spiritual church, from mankind as a whole must that church be taken, to the everlasting exclusion from heavenly religious privileges of all other human beings. In vain is God's word which shews the election and salvation of the spiritual church to have been subservient to the salvation of the world, 1 Cor. 15:23-28, 1 Tim. 4:10, in contrast and opposition to the election of the fleshly church which was directly subservient to the appearance and work of Christ Jesus, Isaiah 42:1, Gal. 3:16-19, pointed out to men of this stamp. The *narrowing* principles of the human mind will here as in every other case assert their supremacy, and constrain those who possess nothing higher to loathe and abhor the *enlarging* and *infinitely expansive* principles of the divine mind. The idea of strict and sovereign election being directly [190] subservient to infinite and universal enjoyment, will be scouted by mere fleshly men as the most absurd of all absurdities. Man's mind, therefore, stands directly opposed to God's mind with reference to the position which the church, spiritually considered, occupies in regard to the world. The former would carry out the exclusive privileges of the church for ever, even at the expense of sin, which God abhors, being thereby rendered eternal — of death triumphing over a large proportion of the human family — of the work of the Messiah being limited and circumscribed — of the Devil, a creature, being made to share for ever the dominion of intelligent beings with the Creator — and of mercy, the grand attribute of Jehovah, being darkened and eclipsed by an everlasting infliction of torments which is absolutely inconsistent with its exercise. The mind of God, on the other hand, assigning to the exclusive privileges of the heavenly church their proper place as preliminary and subservient, shews, through the medium of that complete satisfaction which divine justice received in the cross of Christ, and through the medium of our Lord's ascension to God's right hand as the appointed channel of mercy, these exclusive privileges ultimately terminating in their own destruction: God thus, in consequence of conferring the divine nature previously upon the church, acquiring the means of conferring that nature ultimately upon all. Rev. 21:5; 1 Cor. 15:28.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> The import of the inversion treated of in this eleventh section may be better understood if I thus succinctly express it: —

Human Order.

1

Natural good to all.—

2

Natural good to a few.

[191]

## SECTION XII.

## SIXTH SPECIMEN OF INVERSION.

## MAN ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME GOOD WITH EVIL; GOD ACTUALLY OVERCOMES EVIL WITH GOOD.

There is probably not a single intelligent being, capable of comprehending the terms of the proposition, who would in so many words maintain that the creature can overcome the Creator. Indeed, to give even human nature its due, every one would, as a matter of course, profess to hold such a doctrine in the utmost abhorrence.

And yet, under the influence of a necessity which they cannot control, mankind both think and act continually on the very principle which they profess to repudiate. According to scripture, God conquers every foe. Isaiah 27:4; Psalm 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:13. All persons and things are in his hands but as *clay in the hands of the potter*; Jer. 18:1-6; Isaiah 45:9; Rom. 9:20-23; and *he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*. Daniel 4:35. Nothing, therefore, can frustrate his purposes. Nevertheless, in the teeth of their own express declarations and of all this scripture evidence, men act as if they could subdue God; and almost all human speculations on the subject of religion proceed upon the principle, that something has been done by the creature which has reduced the Creator to a stand-still, has compelled him to alter or at least modify his plans, and has constrained [192] him even to feel that there exist beings who share his sovereign authority with himself.

Without any further preface, let us at once adduce the proofs of all this.

## 1. As to the creature's practice.

Originally, God issued a single prohibition to our first fleshly progenitor: — *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* — Gen. 2:17. Nothing, apparently, can be more clear and satisfactory than the right of him who imposed this law to do so; than the obligation under which man lay to obey it; and than the consequences necessarily attendant on transgression. To measure strength with the Almighty, by violating his prohibition, appears abstractly to be the very acmé of insanity. Isaiah 27:4.<sup>82</sup> Notwithstanding all this, however, man did venture on disobedience. Although aware, to quote the language of his wife, that God, speaking of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, had said, *ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*; Gen. 3:3; he yet presumed to fly in the face of his own convictions. The woman, having first eaten herself, *gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* Ibid. 3:6. He thus set God and his threatenings at defiance. Nay, he acted in this as if, instead of God having power to control him, he had power [193] to control God. A creature had suggested to Eve, *ye shall not surely die;* Gen. 3:4; and she, believing the creature rather than the Creator, transgressed. Her husband, although not deceived in the same manner as she was, 1 Tim. 2:14, chose to follow her example: labouring doubtlessly under a delusive sort of impression that, by what he did, he should in some one way or another disappoint and thereby frustrate the purposes of God. He soon however found out his mistake. He aimed by transgression at overcoming God; or it was his object by means of the sin or evil which he committed to become as God, and thereby to rise above the natural good which

constituted his portion in his creation state. But, so far from becoming independent of God by what he did, he found that he was only thereby more decidedly manifesting his entire and necessary dependence upon God: by his transgression he having been merely displaying that enmity to God which was naturally and necessarily inherent in his fleshly mind; Rom. 8:7; as well as having thereby in every other respect been accomplishing the designs of Jehovah. Rom. 5:14, &c.

<sup>82</sup> Read in connexion with this, Eccles. 9:3, *Madness is in their heart while they live*, and 2 Tim. 1:7, *God hath given us the spirit—of a sound mind*: in the former of which passages, insanity is expressly asserted to be a characteristic of human nature; and in the latter of which the same fact is implied, inasmuch as the spirit of Christianity being the spirit of a sound mind, it follows *e contrario* that the spirit of human nature, from the bondage of which Christianity sets us free, must be the spirit of an unsound mind.

Subsequently, God imposed many ordinances and one law on the nation of Israel: the ordinances to continue in force in the letter, until obeyed by the Messiah both in the letter and spirit; Heb. 8:9 and 10; and the one law to take effect immediately after the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead. Mark 16:15,16; Acts 1:8; 2:38,39; 3:19, &c., 10:41-43, &c.; 16:31; Rom. 10:8-10. With the sanctions of threatened punishments and a promised reward were these ordinances and this law accompanied. God having issued these, it follows that beings who believed him to have done so, and who [194] were really convinced of his right to enforce his statutes, as well as of their own inability to cope with his omnipotence by resisting them, would have been most careful to yield them obedience. For disobedience, under such circumstances, was equivalent to declaring that God's law and threatenings had been given in vain; that although issuing from the Creator, nevertheless they creatures were able to render them of no effect; in a word, that God might be overcome by the workmanship of his own hands. Well, were the Israelites obedient? Let the contents of the Old and New Testament Scriptures answer the question. From the first moment of their selection as God's favoured people, down to the close of their history as standing to God in that relation, we find nothing but constant and flagrant and increasing acts of rebellion charged against them. See Psalm 78. They absolutely set God at defiance. They acted, not as if he had been supreme over them, but as if they had been supreme over him. When God's own Son appeared in flesh, and in the midst of the Old Testament vineyard, Isaiah 5:1-7, instead of giving him that welcome and reverence which was his due, they cast him out of it, and slew him. Matt. 21:37-39. When his Apostles proclaimed to them the glad tidings of reconciliation, implying remission of sins and an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom through the resurrection of him whom they had crucified, and through faith in his name, — the Apostles proving their commission by *signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost*, Heb. 2:4, the force of which even Jews themselves could not gainsay, Acts 4:15-17, — the infatuated men addressed obstinately resisted all these exhibitions and overtures of love [195] and mercy, thereby bringing down swift and awful destruction upon themselves. In other words, both before Christ came, and subsequently to his appearing, they acted as if they could overcome God. The Jews were gods certainly in an inferior sense. Psalm 82:6; John 10:34.<sup>83</sup> But they mistook their situation and privileges entirely. Instead of perceiving that they enjoyed the rank of gods upon earth by the mere favour of Jehovah alone, and that an earthly privilege which he had conferred he could also take away, they acted as if to be gods had been theirs inherently and of right, and as if it implied a dignity of which they could not by any possibility be dispossessed. John 8:33,39,41. And this, too, in the face of a threatening of the forfeiture on their part of that dignity, contained in the very psalm in which the appellation *gods* is given to them. Psalm 82:7.<sup>84</sup> Neglecting every warning, and setting at defiance every threat, they opposed God by opposing the setting up of the kingdom of his dear Son. See the book of the Acts of the Apostles *throughout*. In so doing, they acted as if they could conquer God and make void his purposes. The event shewed that they were merely, in ignorance,<sup>85</sup> affording a further illustration of that necessary and unchangeable enmity to God of human mind, which Adam had originally displayed; and that in their case, no less than in [196] his, in all cases indeed, every such exhibition of impotent enmity is merely subservient to

an exhibition of God's mighty power in overruling and overcoming it. Rom. 9:17. Also Daniel 4:28-37.

<sup>83</sup> Compare Gen. 3:5, with this passage, Psalm 82:6, as well as with Psalm 8:5 in the Hebrew, and Psalm 97:7. It will then be perceived, that the dignity of being gods upon earth, to which Adam and Eve aspired, and the acquisition of which constituted one of their motives to transgress, was a dignity actually conferred upon Abraham's fleshly descendants.

<sup>84</sup> *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* Take this along with John 10:31-39, and Rev. 12:7-9.

<sup>85</sup> Acts 3:17; 13:27.

This disposition of creature mind practically to set God at defiance, and if possible to overcome him, was not confined to Adam and the nation of Israel. It makes its appearance among other human beings likewise, in the ordinary operations of fleshly conscience. Mankind in general professedly regard the dictates of conscience as being to them the dictates of God himself. Taking this view, unquestionably they are wrong. God never issued laws *directly* to mere man, except in the cases of Adam and Abraham's natural posterity; and the prohibitions and commands of conscience, whatever they may be *indirectly*, are *directly* but the laws which each individual mind acting as God, and thereby manifesting its original formation after the divine image, sees meet to prescribe to itself — these laws being always regulated by the degree of natural illumination of which each person may chance to be possessed. But although it is a fact that the laws of conscience are prescribed to us by ourselves and not by God, yet this fact is known for certain only by a few. To the great majority of the human race — and it is a blessed circumstance for the well-being of society that it is so — the laws of conscience are in their apprehension the laws of God. Every individual then who regards God as having, by the law of conscience, prohibited certain thoughts and actions to him, and as having annexed certain punishments to the violation of what he has prohibited, who nevertheless indulges in the thoughts and actions thus forbidden, practically disavows and throws off his allegiance to God; practically expresses his con-[197]viction that he can in some way or another avoid the consequences threatened, and thereby subdue the Most High. He may not exactly anticipate being able to accomplish his end by open violence, but it comes to the same thing, in so far as the conquering of God is concerned, if he expect to succeed in consequence of the Divine compassion, that is the Divine weakness, not permitting the punishments previously supposed to have been denounced by God to be carried into effect. It is enough that, in his apprehension, God's declarations may in one way or another be evaded or defeated. All crime, whether committed against God or conscience, is thus by its very nature practical atheism. The opposition to God which is involved in violations of conscience is of course not *direct*, like that which appears in violations of laws *directly* imposed by God himself. But it lays the foundation of a most cogent and powerful *à fortiori* argument. If men feel indisposed to obey on all occasions even the dictates of their own consciences, brought down and accommodated as these are in a great measure to their own capacities, appetites, and inclinations, *how much less* the pure and holy law of God himself, which knows no adaptation to human inability, makes no allowances for human weakness! If men set at defiance even the god of their own breasts, proverbially indulgent to their earthly and criminal inclinations as he is, *how much more* would they have trampled under foot the laws of the living and true God, supposing these to have been imposed upon them, from a sheer feeling of desperation, having its origin in the conviction, that laws so harsh and in their case so unreasonable and impracticable it would have been in vain for them to attempt to comply with.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> How graphically is the effect of the letting in of divine law upon the human mind described in Romans, seventh chapter, from the seventh verse downwards! Let those who affect to represent man as able to obey God's law, and God's law consequently as being suitable to mere human mind, do me the favour to reconcile their favourite notion with that passage. Why, divine law, if laid upon man to its full extent, would, as in the heathen story of Jupiter's manifestation to Semele, at once and thoroughly consume him. See Ovid's Metamorphoses. Even a glimpse of that law, as requiring our own personal obedience in order to the future

enjoyment of God, is, from the utter hopelessness of success, enough to drive any one of us to the most desperate counsels. Blessed be God! divine law found in the divine man its only and its appropriate subject. Psalm 40:8; Deut. 6:5; and Matt. 22:37,38. And in thus shewing who was the person for whose sake it was given forth, it shews its nature and extent, as well as the impossibility of the creature ever having been able to satisfy its demands. Rom. 8:3,4; 10:4; also 7:7-11, and 3:19.

[198] 2. Not less in theory than in practice does man intimate his conviction, that the creature may defeat God's plans and thereby overcome God.

Theories of the origin and perpetuation of evil, which "are as plenty as blackberries," bring this fact forcibly and painfully to light.

These universally assume that evil had a beginning. To maintain the reverse, their authors are well aware, would be to run themselves upon the Manichean principle of good and evil being co-essential and co-eternal. Such a statement being rather too gross is of course avoided. Evil then, according to ordinary theories on the subject, had an origin; and that, either in heaven among the angels from whom it travelled down to earth, or on earth with man himself. According to them further, God could have had no connexion whatever with its introduction; for, if in any respect whatever owing to him, he must be the author of sin: a mere Manichean doctrine at bottom, implying the tendency of man's mind to assign to evil an entrance into the world independently of God; and a bugbear of which fleshly theologians have taken [199] care amply to avail themselves. Well, then, upon such principles God is defeated; inasmuch as a calamity takes place, which either he did not foresee, or which if he did foresee he could not prevent. The Creator is so far overcome as to be reduced to his shifts, in order to devise some remedy for a most unexpected and most untoward occurrence. Something like a remedy at last is discovered. God's own Son appears in flesh, and succeeds in rescuing a certain number, smaller or greater, of the human family, from the clutches of the evil one. But either he cannot or he will not interpose in behalf of all; and, as a necessary consequence, the rest of mankind and the whole of the fallen angels are left under Satan's sway for ever. That is, sin, having once in defiance of God's will to the contrary obtained a footing in the universe, contrives, either in defiance of God's will to the contrary or agreeably to his will, to preserve that footing for ever! If the former, then as God was unable to prevent the introduction of sin, so being once introduced he is equally unable to eradicate it. He is on this hypothesis doubly overcome: overcome at first in the entrance, and overcome finally in the everlasting perpetuation, of sin. He is content in the long run to compromise matters as it were, and to share his conquests with his enemy. Rescuing some from ruin and raising them to glory, whatever may be his desires and wishes to the contrary he is constrained to confirm and perpetuate the dominion of evil over the rest for ever. Sin, which he hates, he is thus forced to render eternal; and the creatures of his hand, ceasing to be subject to his control, pass for ever under the sway of another. — But if the latter, that is, if God could have rescued all from the power of evil and yet has [200] not chosen to do so, is not this to invest him with the character of a *dæmon*? First *weak*, he is afterwards upon this hypothesis *wicked*. He was defeated, according to it, in the original introduction of sin; and yet he is content, notwithstanding that he has in his power the means of subsequently eradicating it, to confer upon it everlasting existence! Can any theory be conceived more monstrous? Thus, then, stands the matter. If God willed the existence of sin and sinners for ever, then he delights in that which scripture declares him to hate; Psalm 45:7; 5:5; 26:5; makes that an end, which scripture declares to be only a means to an end; Rom. 5:21; and takes to himself the attribute of really hating his creatures, in opposition to scripture which constantly asserts that towards them he is really and essentially love! 1 John 4:8-10. If, on the contrary, God did not will the existence of sin and sinners, either in time or throughout eternity, and yet both exist and exist for ever in opposition to his will, then the purposes of the Creator have been frustrated, that is, the Creator has been overcome by the creature! One of these two alternatives must be chosen by all who, agreeing in the assertion that evil was originally brought in by the creature, maintain also that, having once been introduced, it is perpetuated throughout

everlasting ages in the universe. As the former of these revolting consequences, namely, that God voluntarily keeps it in existence without being under any necessity to do so, is not likely to be a favourite with many; the latter, namely, that it is kept for ever in existence in spite of God's wishes to the contrary, will be the one generally adopted. That is, God's will for the happiness of all his creatures is generally considered to have been in some way or other [201] defeated and frustrated, by the opposing will of these very creatures themselves.

In direct and unequivocal opposition to man's attempts thus to degrade God both practically and theoretically, by attempting to overcome him and by representing him to have been overcome, stand God's representations of his own character, procedure, and triumphs, in the Holy Scriptures.

A very few remarks will serve to make this apparent.

First. God is never vanquished by his creatures.

This is incessantly dwelt on as a first principle both in the Old and the New Testament Scriptures. *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.* Isaiah 45:7. *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* Ibid. 46:10. *For of a truth, against thy Holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* Acts 4:27,28. *Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* Ephes. 1:11. Besides the same truth being maintained in passages already quoted, Daniel 4:35, Acts 2:23, Rom. 9:17, and others innumerable.

From all which we gather that whatever designs the creature may cherish, and whatever actions he may perform, they all originate in the will, are subject to the control, and accomplish the purposes of him in whom the creature *lives, and moves, and has his being.* It is true that God cannot in any case aim at evil as his end or object, any more than he can act under the influence of evil as his motive. For to be under the bondage of evil is an attri-[202]bute, not of the Creator but of the creature. James 1:13-15. Aiming at good, however, and rendering every thought and every action of his creatures subservient to this end, God carries his purposes into effect, no less through the volitions of intelligent beings, than he does through any other channel. Gen. 1:20.

Secondly. Good is actually the result of all those evil actions of the creature which stand recorded in the Scriptures.

To confine myself to a few instances.

While Adam abstained from disobedience, continuation or perpetuation of mere earthly existence was the utmost advantage of which his nature was susceptible. Indeed, although he had abstained from evil until the present moment, he would not have advanced himself or his posterity one step towards the enjoyment of heavenly life. This I say advisedly and fearlessly. Theological writers, indulging in dreams of the most romantic kind, have absurdly fancied that if Adam had continued obedient for a time, that is, for some limited period of probation, he would have merited, and would have received as his inheritance, life and immortality in a higher state. Now no amount of obedience on the part of a creature could have entitled him to such a reward. Nay, nothing short of the death of the Creator manifest in flesh himself could have conferred even upon *him* a right to it. Compare Luke 17:10, with Philip. 2:6-11, and both with Matt. 19:20-22. But the fallacy of the popular doctrine is, all reasonings and conclusions apart, settled in a moment by a reference to the inspired record itself. Consulting Gen. 2:16,17, we find, that God there promised nothing to Adam, in the event of his continued and persevering abstinence from [203] evil, but continued exemption from the loss of the earthly life already possessed by him; which, properly speaking, is no promise at all, but rather a threatening of what he should incur if disobedient. So that while he continued obedient there was no possibility of a

Saviour being revealed; and consequently no possibility of man being raised to the enjoyment of life and immortality in the heavenly state. Adam's continued abstinence from evil and continued enjoyment of *apparent* good, stood thus as an impediment in the way of God's conferring *real* good upon man. And his own transgression, although an awful display of the inherent enmity of the creature to the Creator, nevertheless was the means of affording to God the first opportunity for displaying his love and purposes of mercy towards his creatures. Then it was that God's goodness was enabled first to make itself known, in a promise of *the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent*; Gen. 3:15; or of the future Saviour, in the same flesh which had sinned and died, bringing sin and death to an end, and thereby opening up the way for conferring upon the victims of both, righteousness and life everlasting. See John 3:14,15.

Just so in regard to that spiritual and heavenly church, to which we referred in the foregoing section, without the previous existence of which salvation could not ultimately have become the portion of the whole human race. 1 Cor. 15:23, &c. As while Adam continued obedient there could be no heavenly life, so while the fleshy Israel continued obedient it was impossible that the spiritual Israel could have a being. The existence of the latter was absolutely dependent on the previous unbelief and disobedience of the former. Nay, to speak correctly, however disobedient the [204] former might be until the Messiah, the true Abraham, came upon earth and died, the fleshy church of the Jews appears to have stood justified in and shielded by the righteousness of the typical Abraham, their earthly progenitor. Rom. 4:11,12. But their justification in the fleshy Abraham was merely contingent and temporary. Upon themselves, humanly speaking, it was made to depend, whether their earthly justification should be perpetuated or terminated; just as in Adam's case it had, humanly speaking, been made to depend upon him whether his earthly life and enjoyments should be perpetuated or not. The Jews alone had the power, humanly speaking, either of establishing their earthly house and privileges for ever in this present world, by welcoming and submitting to the Saviour when he made his appearance among them and by continuing to submit to him; or, Sampson-like, of pulling down the sacred structure erected by Jehovah at Mount Sinai upon their own heads. The latter alternative, blessed be God, they preferred. For thereby the justification and protection which they had so long enjoyed in the fleshy Abraham came to an end; and thereby was the way opened up for the introduction and establishment of the heavenly church. Their crucifixion of the Messiah was the means of bringing in a righteousness which is everlasting, Dan. 9:24, Rom. 10:4, and thereby of bringing to an end their fleshy state, and their fleshy justification in the fleshy Abraham. If justified thenceforward, it was necessary that they should be so as a heavenly church, in the true and everlasting righteousness of the heavenly Abraham. To afford them an opportunity of rising from the fleshy to the heavenly state, by availing themselves of the everlasting justification offered [205] in the Messiah, forty years were vouchsafed to them. Rather, that period was conceded that the nation of the Jews, as a whole, might have an opportunity of manifesting that devilish enmity to God which renders the human mind, under all circumstances, incapable of obeying a divine law; Isaiah 5:4; Rom. 8:7; and that out of these Jews, and out of the Gentiles, might be taken the elect number who were to constitute the true Israel and to inherit the kingdom. John 1:12,13; Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 3:29. And then the earthly state of the church was brought to a close for ever. In first putting to death the Messiah, and afterwards in rejecting him glorified, the Jews acted according to the dictates of their own fleshy minds, and without any external violence having been offered to them. And yet, in both respects, they were merely and exactly accomplishing the divine purposes. They who, in their *crucifixion of the Lord of Glory*, and in thereby destroying their own state as a fleshy church, however wicked they might be, had acted *according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; Acts 2:23; *afterwards, in rejecting the counsel of God against themselves*, Luke 7:30, and *judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life*, Acts 13:46, by refusing to become subjects of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom, were still further the mere instruments of fulfilling God's purpose *to blind their eyes and to harden their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, and should*

*understand with their hearts, and be converted, and he should heal them.* Isaiah 6:9,10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-28. Goodness, however, on the part of Jehovah, as it was the aim so likewise will it be the result of all the evil perpetrated by the chosen people. For although deprived, [206] by their own unbelief fulfilling the divine purpose, of their situation and privileges as the fleshly church of God, it was that thereby, as the only means of accomplishing this object, a spiritual and heavenly church might be summoned into being, — in the blessings connected with which the Jews themselves, not in an earthly but in a heavenly state, and thereby conformed to their heavenly head, might ultimately be made to share. Rom. 11:26-32. Adam's loss of creature life paved the way for the bestowing of divine life; and the loss of their state and privileges as an earthly church by the Jews paved the way for the setting up and establishment of that heavenly church, through which ultimately the enjoyment of divine life accrues to all. I might, were it necessary, and did the limits of my work permit, go over the whole of the scriptures, pointing out at every step how human wickedness is shewn to have been subservient to the display of divine goodness. I might, for instance, draw attention to the fact, that the grievous misconduct of the antediluvian world, in leading to the flood, afforded an opportunity to God to display his special goodness in calling Abraham, and through him the fleshly church. Also, that the opposition of Pharaoh and the Egyptians to the departure of the children of Israel gave occasion to God's exhibiting his goodness, in delivering his chosen people. And also, that the wickedness, incessant rebellions, and grievous idolatries of the Israelites themselves, by causing them to be dispersed among the heathen, were means of spreading the name and worship of the living and true God throughout districts and regions of the world where otherwise, humanly speaking, God must have remained unknown; and, above all, were instrumental in preparing matters, by means of the [207] synagogues erected in Grecian and Roman cities and the worshippers therein assembled, for the preaching of the everlasting gospel by the Apostles. I say, I might do all this and much more. But in pointing out the subserviency of man's one transgression to the mission of that Saviour, who by his death and resurrection from the dead was to bruise the serpent's head, and *swallow up death in victory*, 1 Cor. 15:54; and of the transgression of the fleshly church, to the salvation of that heavenly church, through which all God's ulterior purposes of love and mercy are to be carried into effect; Rom. 11:11-32; I conceive myself to have done enough to establish my position.

Thirdly. Such a display of goodness as shall issue in the complete and everlasting annihilation of evil, that is, in the complete and everlasting conquest of evil by the Creator, is what the whole scope and tenor of scripture gives us triumphantly to anticipate.

Indirectly, the scriptures lead us to this conclusion by the facts which I have been proving. The subserviency of evil to good is marked on every instance and stage of the divine procedure hitherto. And this, in decided opposition to all those tendencies of man's mind which would, from the introduction and present existence of evil, lead him to infer its existence and establishment for ever. But is God afterwards to alter the whole tenor of his conduct, to prefer in a future state the order of the *fleshly* to the order of the *spiritual*, and to conform the issue of his dispensations, not to their glorious and progressive and infinitely expanding commencement, but to what the narrow and selfish views of man anticipate it will be? Although God is *now* manifestly putting Satan under his [208] feet, and preparing the way for his utter extinction, according to the narratives of inspired Evangelists and the writings of Prophets and Apostles, is he *at some future period*, instead of prosecuting and finishing the plan now so successfully begun, — instead of going on to accommodate by elevating the minds of his creatures to the level of his own, — actually to set about accommodating by degrading his mind to the level of theirs? And for the accomplishment of this monstrous purpose, is he to reverse and make a complete overturn of spiritual principles already introduced, to re-establish that authority of Satan which now he is engaged in subverting, and ultimately to concede to a being whose objects he is now counteracting and thwarting, millions of the human race to be his subjects for ever? thereby, instead of employing sin as his servant,<sup>87</sup> making himself *the minister of sin*,<sup>88</sup> rendering the existence of sin and

Satan eternal, and not only consenting to receive a rival to his throne, but actually with his own hands erecting the throne of that rival for ever! Is God's present hatred of evil, — are his present arrangements to overcome it with good, as apparent in the death and resurrection of his well-beloved Son and the salvation of his Son's church, — to be exchanged ultimately for such a love of sin on God's part, or at all events for such an inability to subdue it, as is necessarily implied in his conferring upon it everlasting existence? Forbid it heaven. This cannot be. The beginning of the Divine plan which is traced in the scriptures, however much the complete realization may be opposed to human ideas on the subject, God will follow out to its legitimate result. He will keep evil under his [209] control at every step. Acts 2:23. He will render it subservient to his purposes while it continues in existence. Gen. 50:20. Rom. 9:17. And when the purposes to which it is subservient are answered, he will destroy it. Rom. 16:20. 1 Cor. 15:25,26. To this conclusion, and to this only, is it not evident that, reasoning from God's procedure with regard to sin hitherto, we are irresistibly conducted?

<sup>87</sup> Psalm 76:10; Isaiah 45:7.

<sup>88</sup> Gal. 2:17.

Other indirect arguments founded on the authority of scripture lead to the same result.

Evil had a beginning.<sup>89</sup> And this, whether we assign to it an origin in Eden, as I confess I do, or suppose it to have made its appearance first in heaven among the rebellious angels.<sup>90</sup> But whatever had a beginning must also have an end. For there is no eternity *à parte post*, to speak after the manner of the schoolmen, which does not imply an eternity *à parte ante*; or no *future eternity*, (if such a phrase may be used,) which does not imply *past* [210] *eternity*; and *vice versa*. Whatever therefore cannot boast of a *past eternal duration*, no more can possess a *future eternal one*. Hence *human nature*, as having begun in time, exists only in time: it being as clothed with the *divine nature* that we exist throughout eternity. 1 Cor. 15:50. And hence, likewise, Sin, as having been introduced *in time*, must come to an end *with time*: eternity which implied the exclusion of its *past*, equally implying the exclusion of its *future* existence. Does any one deny my postulate, that whatever had a beginning may also have an end? and venture to maintain in opposition to it, that evil may exist eternally in *future* although it had no eternal existence in *the past*? Such a one must take up his position on one of two grounds: either first, on that of God, after having once brought evil into existence or having permitted it to exist, finding himself unable or being unwilling to bring it to an end; or secondly, on that of the possibility of there being eternal duration which nevertheless had a commencement. If he justify his denial by the former of these arguments, what becomes of God's omnipotence, or what of his hatred of sin? If by the latter, may I request him to have the goodness not to assume, but to prove, the possibility of that which is eternal having a beginning. To me, and I presume to every man capable of reflection who has not some point to gain, eternal existence is unchangeable existence, and consequently is not more susceptible of a beginning than it is of an end. Until then the contrary can by sufficient proofs be established, I shall consider myself entitled to retain my own view of the subject. As to the minor of my argument, "that sin had a beginning," it can only be questioned by some systematic Manichean, — [211] with whom I should be extremely loath to suppose any of my readers inclined to enter into an alliance, — who is determined *coute qui coute* to maintain the eternal existence of evil as well as good, and thereby to assign to evil an attribute essential and restricted to God and the divine nature. 1 Tim. 6:16. 1 Cor. 15:49. 2 Peter 1:4. Assuming that whatever begins must end, and that sin had a beginning, my conclusion follows of necessity.

<sup>89</sup> Some years since I perused with much care, but not with much profit, the very learned work of Archbishop King on the "Origin of Evil." Should I be spared, and enabled to publish a M.S. on the "Atonement," which I have now lying beside me, I anticipate having it in my power to bring under public notice a simple, and scriptural, and consequently to those who are divinely taught satisfactory view of this hitherto most intricate and puzzling subject.

<sup>90</sup> Founded on a mistake as to the meaning of Rev. 12:7-9; which evidently describes the opposition given by the Jews, under the conduct of the fleshly Moses, the *Accuser* (Κατηγορ, query, Διαβόλος?) of the brethren, John 5:45, Gal. 3:10,13, to Christ and his Apostles, as well as the issue of that opposition, the details of which are set before us in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Indeed the passage just referred to is an abstract of the contents of that book. The mistake in question is also founded upon an erroneous interpretation of some other passages, which have been pressed into the service; such as Job 4:18; John 8:44; &c. &c. To enjoy not the *real* but the *typical* heaven was the privilege of the Old Testament church; and from *this* heaven it was that the Dragon and his angels were cast down. See Matt. 11:23,24.

Another argument tending indirectly, but not on that account the less cogently and irresistibly, to the establishment of my position respecting the ultimate and complete triumph of the divine goodness, is, that whatever is necessarily connected with and dependent on something else as being its property, must follow the fate of that upon which it depends. If evil depend upon creature nature, for instance, it must follow the fate of creature nature. But evil does depend on creature nature, not simply considered, but as subject to divine law and exposed to temptation to transgress. It had its origin in the fact of fleshly nature<sup>91</sup> [212] having been endowed with a mind fleshly like itself, and therefore *enmity against God*. Rom. 8:7. But the mere principle of enmity could not of itself have given birth to sin: for there were required along with this, divine law prohibiting transgression, Romans 4:15, 1 John 3:4, as also Romans 3:20; and temptation to transgress as an exciting cause, Gen. 3:1-6, also Matt. 4:1-11; before sin could have had any existence. Upon creature nature, divine law, and temptation, sin then necessarily depended: while they existed, it might exist; and in the event of their being destroyed, it could not fail to be destroyed likewise. But in the cross of Christ creature nature, divine law, and temptation to transgress all came to an end. In that cross they all found their *euthanasia*. In the death of Jesus, as the second Adam and consequently as one with the whole human family, Rom. 5:12, &c., and 1 Cor. 15:21,22, he having been therein the true antitype of the burnt sacrifice, Levit. 1, creature nature ended; John 19:30; Rom. 8:3; in his death, law, as having received its accomplishment, was ended; Rom. 10:4; and in his death, as the termination of the nature to which alone temptation could be addressed and upon which alone it could operate, temptation of course ended. Gen. 3:1-6, with Matt. [213] 4:1-11. Nay, they not merely *ended*, but in the resurrection of Christ the nature of the earthly was *swallowed up* in the nature of the heavenly; and law, in the divine principle of love. The principles upon which sin depended having thus in the cross of Christ come to an end, as a matter of course in that cross sin itself came to an end. Nor is this mere matter of inference. We are expressly informed in the Old Testament scriptures, that the Messiah *should make his soul an offering for sin*; Isaiah 53:10; and in the New Testament, that *in the end of the age* or dispensation *he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. Heb. 9:26. Still farther, another inspired writer declares, that *his own self bare (bare away?)<sup>92</sup> our sins in his own body on the tree*. 1 Peter 2:24. Sin having thus ended in the cross of Christ, — ended in itself, as well as in the principles upon which it depended, — by what possibility can it be resuscitated and perpetuated in a higher state of existence? And this, especially, as we know that the nature to which sin attached, and from which it necessarily emanated, was not only ended by Jesus in flesh, but was, with all its effects and consequences, swallowed up by him in Spirit in his resurrection from the dead.

<sup>91</sup> Without any hesitation I assume sin to have had its origin on earth, and in the fleshly nature of man. It is so stated in Scripture — Gen. 3:1-6 — and that is enough for me. Passages of Holy Writ of doubtful import, and interpreted according to the active and unbridled imaginations of men, — such as are some of those which in a previous note I have alluded to, — can never be allowed to have the weight of a feather against such as are clear and explicit. As to good angels, or holy beings superior to man and thus intermediate between God and man, I have no scripture authority for their existence. The term angels I observe constantly in the sacred writings applied to the Jews, to glorified spirits, and to manifestations of Jehovah. The existence of other angels I neither affirm nor deny: they may or they may not have a place in the universe, for aught that I know about the matter. I question not the power of the infinite Jehovah to create infinite orders of intelligences: but

I question his having seen meet to reveal the existence of such beings to us. In the first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews the angels of God are obviously the members of the fleshly Israel, especially those holding offices among them. See John 10:34, compared with Psalm 82, *throughout*. Compare Psalm 8:5, and 97:7, in the Hebrew, with Hebrews 2:7 and 1:6, in the Greek. And the various rebellions and falls of angels alluded to in Peter, Jude, and the Book of Revelations, can all, with the utmost ease and propriety and without the slightest violence or straining, be shewn to have a reference to events recorded in the Book of Numbers, the Psalms, particularly the 78th, and other portions of the Old Testament Scriptures. Are not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob angels, or a portion of the angels, to whom, in our Lord's argument against the Sadducees, Matt. 22:23-32, and Luke 10:27-38, he declares that the children of the resurrection shall be equal? Compare, particularly, Luke 20:34-36, with 37.

<sup>92</sup> Ανηνεγκεν. See Macknight, *in loc.*, note 1st.

Again; the vain or shadowy character of evil is another powerful though indirect argument in favour of its ultimate absorption and annihilation by divine goodness. *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.* Eccles. 1:2; 12:8. *Surely every man walketh in a vain show.* Psalm 39:6. And in exact conformity to this, it is the declaration of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament Scriptures, that *the creature was made subject to vanity.* [214] Rom. 8:20. In other words, man's nature to which as a human being he is subject, and every thing connected with man's nature, whether it be time, this present world, or any thing else, are vain, that is, empty or shadowy. *All*, observe, without any exception, *is vanity*. Sin which is a consequence and affection of man's nature, being one of the *all things*, is of course vain or shadowy likewise. But that which is shadowy can have no real or lasting existence. It is merely transient. It may fitly enough be connected with a state of things which, like the present, is transient; but what place can it have in that which is future and permanent? The great general principle is, that in its own substance whatever is shadowy must of necessity find its appropriate termination. Now this is exactly what we are arguing. Evil is shadowy, and as such stands opposed to goodness which is substantial. Therefore it is that evil must be transient, and that it must, after having served the purposes for which a temporary existence has been conferred upon it, be swallowed up in goodness as permanent and everlasting. Evil, in a world of darkness and shadows like this, may itself possess a shadowy being. But what existence can it continue to have in a world of realities, where the light of divine manifestation shall have arisen in the fulness and zenith of its perfection, and where it shall have been brought to bear on shadowy creature nature, and on all the shadowy consequences and affections of creature nature, through the medium of the divine and substantial nature of Christ Jesus? In such a state of things what can happen but that all *shadows*, and evil of course among the number, *shall flee away?* Song of Solomon 2:17. See also Psalm 102:25,26, and Heb. 1:11,12.

[215] Here it was originally my intention to have closed the list of arguments indirectly or negatively tending to establish the ultimate and complete triumph of divine goodness over evil. But there is one more, an exclusively scriptural one I admit, which is to my mind so full and satisfactory, that I cannot forbear bringing it under the notice of my readers.

God expelled Adam from Paradise immediately after his transgression, lest, to adopt the language of the sacred record, he should *put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.* Gen. 3:22. Popular views respecting the everlasting existence of sin, as involved in the supposed everlasting existence of man's sinful nature, are completely confuted, nay, to express myself if possible more strongly, receive their death-blow from this single fact alone. The object of removing the ancestor of the human race from Eden was, lest mankind should "share the divine prerogative of immortality," says Bauer, a German Rationalist divine, a translation of whose work on "The Theology of the Old Testament" is now lying before me. In saying so, he expresses the sentiments of almost all who lay claim to the rank and character of theologians. Nay, say I. The expulsion in question took place, not to prevent men from becoming immortal or sharing in the divine nature, for this very gift, the gift of immortality, is bestowed upon them through Christ Jesus; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; 2 Peter 1:4; but it had for

its object to prevent their becoming immortal as Adam's descendants, and thereby to prevent their conferring immortality upon evil, which had now been evinced to be inseparably connected with their nature. That is, man was driven from the garden of Eden lest sin, in [216] consequence of his eating of the tree of life, should acquire eternal existence, through the medium of eternal existence being acquired by his sinful nature; or lest the very thing should happen, which popular theologians would induce us to believe has, notwithstanding the divine precaution to the contrary, actually happened! God closed the gates of the earthly Paradise against man, in order to prevent human nature and thereby sin from becoming eternal; and yet, forsooth, men will have it that, in spite of this, our sinful nature and consequently sin have nevertheless succeeded in rendering themselves eternal! Strange compound of absurdity and impiety! How clear and delightful the truth as to this matter. God prevented man from eating of the fruit of the earthly tree of life, and thereby from becoming immortal as a sinful being, that he might in due time give him to eat of the fruit of the heavenly tree of life, the Lord Jesus glorified, and thereby bestow upon him immortality in connexion with a sinless state of existence. Psalm 1:3, and Jeremiah 17:8, with Rev. 22:2; and both with the import of John 6:26-58. Immortality, therefore, or a sharing with God in the divine nature, 1 Tim. 6:16, is a prerogative of man. But, in consequence of the expulsion of our first parents from paradise, immortality has been prevented from standing connected with Adam's creature nature, and consequently with sin as an affection of that nature; and is shewn to be connected with the divine nature of Christ Jesus, in which the spiritual church first, and the rest of mankind subsequently, are made new. 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Peter 1:4; Rev. 21:5.

The direct arguments in favour of the divine goodness ultimately overcoming by annihilating evil, and consequently in refutation of the notion that evil may succeed in defeating God's purposes, in setting God at defiance, and in compelling him to inflict eternal torments upon sinners, which would be to confer upon sin itself everlasting existence, are so numerous that some selection of them requires to be made. Although all that I intend to adduce have scripture for their basis, yet for the sake of perspicuity and convenience I shall divide them into two classes: first, such as are apparently abstract; and secondly, such as appeal directly to the inspired record. The former class, however important, I shall endeavour to dismiss in as few words as possible; begging the reader to fill up, in his own imagination, any blanks which he may perceive in the reasonings.

#### I. I state such arguments as are to appearance abstract.

1. Sufferings, even in this present imperfect state of things, can only be inflicted in consistency with the claims of goodness. They must have for their object the benefit of the individual, or of society, or of both. Such do we perceive to have been their tendency, as well as their result, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar; in the cases of the flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah; and in the cases of Adam, Abraham, David, and others. To suppose punishment inflicted by God, even in time, without a beneficial object proposed, is to impeach the divine wisdom no less than the divine goodness. But if this be the case with relation to time, much more so with relation to eternity. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth, in the final issue of things especially, do right?* Gen. 18:25. And yet, no beneficial results, to any party concerned, can be shewn to flow from eternal torments. Not of course [218] to the sufferers themselves; for their torments are, by the very terms of the supposition, eternal and increasing. Not to others; for angels and good men are so confirmed in their respective states, that there is no possibility of their forfeiting them. Not to God; for instead of manifesting him to be, what he is, Love, 1 John 4:8,16, it invests him with the attributes of a vindictive and remorseless tyrant. Under such circumstances is it not clear that, although goodness is not only consistent with but even exacts punishments in time, yet to render the display and exercise of goodness consistent with the infliction of torments throughout eternal ages is a moral impossibility.

2. Mercy is one of the ways of manifesting goodness. And enemies and the undeserving are the proper objects of it. Now, the whole race of mankind, as being by nature God's enemies, and as being

so destitute of any claim on his favour for superior blessings as to have deprived themselves even of a title to the continued possession of the life that now is, are just the very beings in regard to whom mercy may find its most appropriate exercise. But the infliction of eternal torments is inconsistent with mercy. Nay, it is to exhibit the opposite principle of revenge in its most awful and savage form. Which then, of the two following, is the more correct and scriptural representation of the divine goodness? That God, after having, in the case of human beings, created an admirable opportunity for the display of his mercy, avails himself of it, by bestowing upon them, as utterly vile and worthless and therefore as the suitable objects of such a favour, life everlasting? Or that, after having given to man, without any act or fault of his own, the nature which he has — after having by the issue of [219] law, and in the course of his providence, brought about the entrance of sin — and after having punished man for his transgression, appropriately enough, by the return of his body to the dust from which it was taken, — he takes occasion, from a state of things which calls loudly for the display of mercy, to do that which must, even to the unsophisticated mind, appear to be a wanton exercise of infinite, inexhaustible, and demoniacal cruelty?

3. It appears from scripture that mankind, even although God's enemies, are the objects of his goodness. Mat. 5:43-48; Acts 14:15-17. But if God be good to enemies, surely much more to friends! This is not merely matter of common sense, but agreeable likewise to the reasoning of an inspired Apostle: — *if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* Rom. 5:10. But mankind have had that enmity which is essential in their fleshly mind, Rom. 8:7, and consequently to their nature, slain or destroyed in the cross of Christ. Eph. 2:15,16. And in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the human nature is swallowed up in the divine: the nature of enmity in the nature of love. 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 5:4; Phil. 3:21. If so, then the family of man, who are in one point of view, or as enemies, fit recipients of mercy, that is, of a particular species of goodness; are in another point of view, or as friends, objects of goodness necessarily and directly as well as in the highest sense of the term. God, who could not but love them even while opposed to him, must of necessity love them still more now that they are one with him. Or, the same argument may be thus turned. Adam, and Jesus as second Adam, are both one with the [220] whole human family: the former, naturally; the latter, supernaturally. Adam, under the influence of fleshly mind, shewed himself to be the enemy of God. Gen. 3:1-6. Jesus, under the influence of divine mind, shewed himself to be the friend of God. Mat. 4:1,11; Luke 23:46; John 19:30. In Adam, all inherit the nature of enmity; 1 Cor. 15:48; in Jesus, all inherit the nature of friendship or love. *Ibid:* see, also, *same chapter, verse 22.* But Adam and the whole human race, even although in the character of oneness with him they are enemies, are nevertheless objects of the divine goodness; much more then, surely, must the whole human race, in their character of oneness with the Lord Jesus as second Adam, and thereby as God's friends, be the objects of the same goodness. If so, what becomes of the eternal existence of evil? What of the eternity of torments?

4. Again; goodness cannot consist with injustice. For there can be no repugnancy among the divine attributes. But the infliction of eternal torments hereafter would imply the grossest and most manifest injustice on the part of God; seeing that sin is already adequately punished<sup>93</sup> in man's sufferings and death, Gen. 3:19, and it is obviously unfair to punish twice for the same offence; seeing that there is no proportion between sufferings which are eternal, and therefore infinite, on the one hand, and sin [221] which is contracted in time, and by a creature nature, and therefore finite, on the other; and seeing that to punish human beings with eternal torments would be to punish them eternally for having possessed in time a nature to which they had been *subjected, not willingly*, Rom. 8:20 — a nature, in the reception of which they had been perfectly passive. Shall we venture then to say, or even to insinuate, that *there is unrighteousness with God?* Rom. 9:14. God forbid! He who righteously inflicts sufferings and death on man in time, — an exact proper portion being observed between sin as finite, and sufferings and death as finite likewise, — could not, without the most egregious violation of all the rules of

righteousness, subject any of his creatures to results so disproportionate to their supposed causes as sufferings for ever. What then follows? Why, that goodness, with which the claims of justice can never be inconsistent, effecting ultimately the complete destruction of evil, and thereby of sufferings and death the consequences of evil, triumphs in the everlasting bestowment of blessings upon them over whom sin and death have temporarily reigned. Rom. 5:21.

<sup>93</sup> Adequately punished *passively* not *actively*: That is, adequately punished, in so far as man himself personally is concerned, and had it been God's purpose merely to leave man under the power of sin and death for ever; but not so, in the event of its having been God's purpose to raise man, in spite of sin and death, to the enjoyment of righteousness and life everlasting. In that case, the adequate punishment of sin could be nothing short of the sufferings and death of the Son of God, or of God manifest in flesh. See my "Assurance of Faith," vol. II., pp. 108,116. As also Appendices, K and L.

5. To suppose one divine attribute to remain unsatisfied, is to suppose the possibility of others remaining unsatisfied likewise. This is a view of things, however, which, strange and monstrous as to a mind capable of reflection it must ever appear to be, so far from shirking, popular theology admits and even glories in. Divine justice, according to it, unsatisfied either by the death of the creature or by that of the Creator, or by both, continues tormenting creatures for ever, as the only means of obtaining satisfaction — a satisfaction which, as the torments are by the terms of the supposition everlasting, of [222] course it never obtains. Goodness, in consequence of this, as a matter of necessity remains unsatisfied likewise; it being impossible to reconcile the supposed fact of God's tormenting any of his creatures throughout eternity, with the entire satisfaction of his goodness in the showering down of benefits upon all. But is the fact of any one divine attribute remaining unsatisfied consistent with the revealed fact of all these attributes being perfect? Nay, is the idea of God spending eternity in vain attempts to satisfy his justice consistent with what he hath revealed concerning his having satisfied that attribute in an inferior sense in the death of the creature, and in a superior sense and substantially in the death of him who *died the just for the unjust*, that he might bring transgressors to God? Certainly not. Justice, according to the scriptures, is satisfied in the complete and everlasting destruction of creature nature, and thereby of sin and death the consequences of that nature, in the cross of Christ. And every impediment to the complete exercise of goodness being thus removed, what is to prevent it freely flowing forth to all? Shall justice have been satisfied, and shall not goodness be satisfied likewise? Nay rather, to take up the subject on its true grounds, the whole system of creation old and new having been of divine arrangement, and God having prepared the present state of things in subserviency to the complete manifestation of his perfections in another and a higher state, shall he not as a matter of course seize upon the opportunity afforded him by the entire display and satisfaction of his justice, to make a corresponding entire display and satisfaction of his goodness? Is there a single human being bold enough to aver that God, having satisfied his justice in the case of [223] all, will be contented to leave his goodness unsatisfied in the case of all? And yet, unsatisfied to its full extent, that is in one word unsatisfied, his goodness must be, whether we adopt the scheme of the everlasting torments, or that of the annihilation of a portion of the human race.

6. God is omnipotent. This all parties profess themselves to be ready to admit. But God is good; or rather, God and goodness are synonymous terms. Matt. 19:17. See also Acts 20:35.<sup>94</sup> If so, then omnipotence can be predicated of goodness, or goodness is capable of overcoming every enemy, and every obstacle real or apparent which can be thrown in its way. What, under such circumstances, must be the fate of evil? It must be overcome of good. Rom. 12:21. Omnipotence cannot be rendered consistent with the fact of any person or thing being able to set it at defiance. But evil, according to the popular systems of theology, is enabled to present a front of hostility, and to maintain an opposition to goodness throughout eternal ages. Having once entered into the universe, it refuses successfully to be expelled. Having obtained certain victims, it claims to have a right, and it proves itself able to enforce its claim, to retain possession of them for ever. Can it be said of goodness with any regard to

truth, supposing this representation of matters to be correct, that it is omnipotent? When evil, by triumphing for ever over some of the human race, continues to perpetuate its own existence throughout eternity, and thus laughs at the attempts of goodness to extend its triumphs to all as impotent and unavailing, is it aught but a mockery to ascribe omnipotence to goodness? God is omnipotent. But his omnipotence is not displayed in giving way to evil, and in being content to share his sovereignty over his creatures eternally with it. He shews himself to be omnipotent, by keeping evil in every mode of its existence and at every step of its progress under his feet, and by finally annihilating it, in consequence of swallowing it up in his own goodness, that is, in himself.

<sup>94</sup> Goodness, considered as a distinct divine attribute, must not, as is but too commonly done, be confounded with holiness. Holiness denotes God as a Being in all respects separate or distinguished from his creatures, especially as separate from them in all that is evil. Goodness, again, denotes the divine attribute of bountifulness, or the divine being as characterized by showering down blessings and benefits upon his creatures. Goodness is the *giving away* principle. This, of course, God alone can, properly speaking, possess. See Acts 20:35, one of the passages referred to in the text. Also consider the doctrine which is implied in Psalm 16:2,3, the language of the Messiah. Some exceedingly useful and valuable remarks on the distinction between שׁוֹנֵק, αγιος, *holy*, and רַחֲם, οσιος, *good* or *gracious*, will be found in the 6th of Dr. Campbell's preliminary dissertations, part 4th.

7. The divine goodness, like every other divine perfection, is infinite. That is, no limits can be assigned to it. And yet, to hold the doctrine of eternal torments is in other words to proclaim that it is not infinite. For, if God's goodness extend hereafter only to *some* and not to *all*, then most obviously and undeniably is that goodness bounded. Aye, and so bounded too, as that evil, not goodness, in regard to a large proportion of the human family, is invested hereafter with the divine attribute of sovereignty. Is such a state of things possible? The *infinite* bounded by the *finite!* Does not the very statement of the proposition refute itself? Let me not be told, by way of getting rid of or at all events of parrying my argument, that justice also is infinite; and that its claims no less than those of goodness must be heard and attended to. I know it. But this objection, so much vaunted by those who avail themselves of it, actually tells [225] on my side. It is formidable, but it is so against those who oppose me. For, the claims of divine justice having received a full and adequate satisfaction in the cross of Christ, justice now no less than goodness demands the bestowment of heavenly blessings and everlasting life upon all. Jesus has by his obedience and death earned as his wages eternal life to all. And therefore it is that infinite justice cannot now be satisfied, except by Jesus seeing the whole human family as *the travail of his soul* invested with life and immortality. Isaiah 53:11. Compare with Philip. 2:6-11. Infinite justice, thus, instead of thwarting the claims of infinite goodness, as popular theology would represent it to do, is actually, if the phraseology may be permitted, engaged in enforcing these claims. Instead of being rivals, they are co-operating to one and the same result. And neither the one nor the other can be satisfied, until all are in and through Christ Jesus made new. Sweetly and harmoniously are all the divine attributes adjusted to each other. They are all infinite; or, boundlessness is their common characteristic. Shew me a single creature of God, and you shew me in that case a being capable of participating in the divine goodness. Tell me however that God, so far from displaying his goodness towards that creature, finds it consistent with his perfections to destine for him eternal torments in a future state of existence; and whatever afterwards you may profess to believe, do not, I beseech you, insult me by alleging that you believe in the *infinity* of the divine goodness.

A variety of other arguments of a general and abstract nature, tending to establish the final and complete triumph of goodness over evil, will occur to every one conversant with the scriptures, and enlightened from above to comprehend their meaning. For instance: the non-immortality of soul and the Adamic nature, implying the impossibility of that soul and that nature existing hereafter to be tormented; the fact of the inspired record mentioning only two intelligent natures in connexion with man, the earthly nature of Adam and the heavenly nature of Christ, 1 Cor. 15:20,54, and leading

thereby irresistibly to the conclusion, that, as Adam's nature dies and passes away, if future torments are to be inflicted at all they must be inflicted on the heavenly and divine nature of Christ — a conclusion which of course refutes itself; and the transcendantly glorious and important truth that God, having displayed his hatred of sin to the utmost extent in the death of his *well-beloved Son, the Creator*, — that event by which sin is taken away, — it is absolutely impossible, that he could add to or heighten the display of his hatred of it by the infliction of torments, however long protracted, upon *mere creatures*; I say, arguments such as these have in all probability suggested themselves to many, and might here be insisted on. But I pass them over at present, as having already urged and enforced them, with many more, in my "Assurance of Faith," vol. II., my "Three Questions," and my "Dialogues," particularly "Dialogue 4th." Arguments derived from the divine goodness, not introduced avowedly for the purpose for which I am now writing, will be found in Dr. Balguy's interesting little work on the "Divine Benevolence," and in Paley's "Natural Theology." Mr. J. D. Williamson, of New York, in his "Argument for Christianity," has in a succinct, and yet powerful and masterly manner, proposed and established the obvious and necessary conclusion from the divine goodness. And my dear friend, Mr. Richard Roe, of [227] Dublin, has, in the first of his "Three Tracts," presented the same subject in a very clear and convincing light. He had previously done so, at somewhat more length, in analyzing certain passages of scripture which are treated of in his pamphlet, entitled, "A short help and incentive to an unbiassed inquiry into the scripture truth of Universalism."

II. I now state those arguments in favour of the complete triumph of goodness over evil ultimately, which are directly scriptural.

Scripture, which we have already seen in Gen. 3:22 indicating the non-immortality of Adam's evil nature, and thereby inferentially the non-eternity of evil itself, following out the same grand truth gives a death-blow to the eternal existence of sin, that favourite dogma of human divines from the introduction of Manicheism to the present day, by proclaiming in positive terms its final and complete destruction. Figuratively and yet most significantly it does so, in the first promise of *the seed of the woman bruising the Serpent's head*; or of Jesus, the Messiah, depriving Satan and sin of their temporary being. Gen. 3:15. See also Rom. 16:20. Plainly, the same view is given in Psalm 104:35, a prayer of the Messiah no doubt ultimately to be realized.<sup>95</sup> — *Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be NO MORE.* In Daniel 9:24, where it is represented as the office of the Messiah, among other things, *to make an end of sins.*<sup>96</sup> [228] In John 1:29, where the inspired Baptist exclaims, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.* In Hebrews 9:26, where mention is made of Christ as having *now once in the end of the world*, or rather age, that is, the Mosaic dispensation, *appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.* In 1 John 2:2, where the Apostle speaks of *Jesus Christ, the righteous, as the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* And, omitting a vast number of other passages, in 1 Corinthians, 15th chapter, where, after the 110th Psalm which announces the reign of the Messiah as destined to continue till he should have *put all enemies under his feet* has in verse 25th been referred to, it is added at verse 26th, *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, or death the last enemy shall be destroyed:*<sup>97</sup> language which admits of no other interpretation, than that every other enemy, and sin of course among the rest, must have been previously destroyed. Need I spend a moment in proving, what is self-evident, the thorough inconsistency of this spiritually revealed fact with the popular dogma of the existence of sin, one of the very enemies in question, for ever?

<sup>95</sup> *I know that thou hearest me always.* John 11:42.

<sup>96</sup> Without doubt, to make an end of *sin-offerings*. That is true. But the word used is *sins*, ιπάτια, just as *sin*, αιπάτια, is the word used in 2 Cor. 5:21. In neither case must the glorious truth that Jesus ended sin itself by his atoning sacrifice, be allowed to be frittered away by pretending that the only sense of the Holy Ghost is his having ended sacrifices for sins, a truth unquestionably, but a truth of an inferior description. See MKnight's translation of 2 Cor. 5:21, and his note, No. 1. The fact is, sacrifices for sin ended in our blessed

Lord, just because sin itself found its termination in him; or the ending of sacrifices for sin was involved in the ending of sin itself. See Hebrews 10:1-14.

<sup>97</sup> See Archbishop Newcome's Version, and the Improved one published above thirty years ago by a committee of the Unitarian body. In Dr. M'Knight's *literal translation*, the passage runs thus: — *The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.* Mr. Penn, I perceive, as is usual, adheres almost verbally to the common version.

And this ultimate and complete destruction of evil with which the scriptures make us acquainted, is by the same [229] scriptures shewn to be the achievement, the conquest, the everlasting triumph of goodness. It affords the grand, the conclusive evidence, that *the Lord is good to all*; and that *his tender mercies are over all his works*. Psalm 145:9. It is the key to the understanding of those sublime and magnificent passages of Isaiah, the 25th and 26th chapters; and it enables us to enter into the spirit of that impassioned prosopopœia of the prophet Hosea, referred to by the Apostle Paul, *O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes!* Hosea 13:14. See also 1 Cor. 15:54,55. But, to abstain from every thing that may present even the aspect of mere declamation, and to direct our attention towards the scriptures alone, in Matt. 5:43, we meet with the following passage: — *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be, or approve yourselves to be,*<sup>98</sup> *the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the [230] unjust.* Matt. 5:43-45. And so on, to the end of the chapter. Now, of what interpretation are these words susceptible except this, that the limited love hitherto exhibited on the part of Abraham's fleshly descendants towards one another, in obedience to divine law,<sup>99</sup> verse 43d, was thenceforward to give place to and be exchanged for a feeling of unlimited love towards all, even enemies and evil doers; verses 44 and 45;<sup>100</sup> just as God's manifestation of limited goodness hitherto to the fleshly church had been intended to be subservient to and to issue in a manifestation of his goodness to all. For observe, it is God's own manifested character, and not some imaginary standard of excellence, which they are exhorted to set before them and imitate. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;* verse 45; and, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;* verse 48. But, upon popular principles, the whole of the words just quoted have no meaning at all; or rather, instead of exhorting to an imitation of God, they are an exhortation on the part of Christ to his disciples to display a spirit, and pursue a line of conduct, exactly the opposite of that which God himself does. For, according to such principles, God at bottom and really hates his enemies;<sup>101</sup> and, in proof of his so doing, and notwithstanding some temporary and deceptive favours which he may shower down upon them, Acts 14:17, 17:25, his purpose is finally to consign millions upon millions of them to the regions of endless woe. And yet Christ's disciples, in order to their shewing themselves to be like God, are in the passage in Matthew commanded to love their enemies! That is, assuming popular principles to be correct, the creature is exhorted to do what the Creator himself does not do; nay, the *very reverse* of what the Creator does; and this, too, *in imitation of the Creator!* What a climax of absurdity! And how is the contradiction in which such principles involve men to be got rid of? Why, obviously, only by putting away popular views of the divine procedure towards sinners as fallacious; and by acquiescing in the doctrine of our blessed Lord, as he himself hath proposed it. God is good. That is, God is merciful and gracious. His goodness, shewn in the first place partially towards the nation of Israel, is afterwards shewn universally towards the whole human race. Nay, shewn in the first place universally in the conferring of certain rational benefits, Acts 14:17, is afterwards shewn [232] universally in the conferring of spiritual and heavenly benefits: in both cases upon all. 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Rev. 21:5. Similar to this was to be the procedure of his disciples. Having, as Abraham's descendants, formerly restricted their love to their fellow members of the fleshly church; Lev. 19:18; they were thenceforward, as descendants of Christ the true Abraham, Gal. 3:29, 1 Peter 1:23, and as members of the spiritual church, to extend their love

to the whole human race. Luke 10:25-37. God is love. His goodness, hitherto confined in its manifestations, was thenceforward to take a wider range; and this, in subserviency to its being ultimately displayed towards all. "Do you, therefore," — such is the import of our Lord's exhortation, — "as having caught God's spirit, shew that this is the case by imitating God's example; and, however limited in your views hitherto, do you evince the more enlarged apprehensions of the divine character which have been conferred upon you, by overleaping narrow distinctions, and in proof of your love to all by doing good to all."

<sup>98</sup> After all, the words I suspect must be taken literally. *That ye may be or become*. So long as the church was in the inferior or reconciled state, exhortations to faith, hope, and love might be addressed to her members; and, it was only on condition of their complying with these exhortations, that they could rise to that higher and saved state in which it is the privilege of the church now to be a state from which exhortations and conditions of every description are excluded. We now, as one with the glorified Jesus, and in proportion to the degree in which his spirit dwells in us, actually possess the earnest of those divine qualities, which, before the salvation of the church, its members were exhorted to aim at and acquire. See what I have said in a preceding part of this work as to the difference between the states of reconciliation and salvation.

<sup>99</sup> See Exodus 17:14-16. Deuteronomy 23:6; 25:17-19. Along with Leviticus 19:18.

<sup>100</sup> Is not this the spirit of the Parable of the good Samaritan, recorded Luke 10:25-37? There can be no doubt that the good Samaritan is our blessed Lord himself.

<sup>101</sup> God unquestionably does in one sense hate his enemies; aye, so hate them, that his *anger shall burn against them unto the lowest Hell*. Deut. 32:22. But while man's idea of God's hatred to his enemies is that, unsated with its exercise here, it pursues them into another and a higher state of existence, thereby rendering malignity a characteristic of Deity, and clothing sin with eternal existence; the view given by God himself of his hatred to his enemies is, that it is merely one means, indeed, the grand means, of expressing his love. He hates those as enemies, whom by means of that very hatred he is converting into friends. His hatred, opposition, or vengeance, is merely subservient to the manifestation of the love which he bore towards them, in his Son, before the world began. He destroys their creature nature, and all the effects of their creature nature, completely and everlasting in the death of his Son, thereby displaying the extent, intensity, and remorselessness of his hatred; and yet, he proves, that what to us apparently is hatred is in reality love, by new-creating the members of the family of man in his Son glorified, and thereby giving them, completely and everlasting, to participate in all the effects of his bounteous and inexhaustible goodness. *God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world*, seeing that it stood condemned already; *but that in consequence of his Son undergoing and exhausting the sentence of condemnation under which the world laboured, the world through him might be saved*. John 3:17. Also 12:47.

In like manner, in Rom. 12:20, the inspired Apostle, after having in the preceding part of the chapter opened up and enforced some of the delightful properties of divine love and divine goodness, sums up the whole practically in the following exhortation: — *Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good*. Now as the earnest of love, or the divine nature, 1 John 4:8,16, is that of which those spoken to [233] are represented as being possessed, in the preceding part of the chapter, Rom. 12:10, and in the subsequent one, 13:8-10; and as it is to the bringing forth of the fruits of the divine nature, that they are, in the passages of these two chapters just referred to, exhorted; query, is the language of Rom. 12:20,21, which confessedly urges to a course of conduct in direct opposition to the revengeful tendencies of human nature, an exhortation to act according to the divine nature or not? If not, then are all the preceding statements, reasonings, and precepts of the Apostle expressly contradicted. But if believers are here pressed to act agreeably to the divine nature — as most assuredly is the case — then is God, in the form of an address to his creatures, here condescending to set before us the principles upon which he himself acts, as well as some of the more prominent features of his actions themselves. He feeds the hungry; he gives drink to the thirsty; Matt. 5:45; along with Exod. 16:11-36; 17:1-7; John 6:26-58; Acts 14:17; in a word, he heaps favours upon the family of man,

although all its members are by nature his enemies. Rom. 8:7; Psalm 2:1-4. Not favours of a trifling description, or ultimately discontinued; but favours which he perseveres in heaping upon them, until at last, by the gift of his own Son and of the divine nature in him, human nature with all its native and essential enmity is, as if by means of coals of fire, ultimately consumed. Thus it is that God, instead of allowing his designs of good towards the creature to be overcome and frustrated by the creature's evil, — as would have been the case had he, provoked by the creature's temporary introduction of sin, rendered sin his arch-enemy eternal, — actually overcomes evil with good, by rendering the [234] entrance of sin, the means of a more glorious display of the attributes of his character than could have been afforded had man continued sinless; and particularly by rendering the entrance of sin the means of his displaying his power and love in the destruction of it, and in thereby elevating those who now possess the evil nature of the creature, to the possession and enjoyment of the riches of his goodness in having conferred upon them the nature of the Creator. He is not overcome of evil, which he would have been had he weakly and pettishly set himself for ever in an attitude of hostility to creatures who had shewn themselves to be his enemies; but he overcomes evil with good, by generously converting enemies into friends. Goodness thus cannot and will not be satisfied, until it shall have overwhelmed evil under *a load of benefits*: Psalm 68:19: God making, in his Son in flesh and crucified, a holocaust or whole burnt offering of human nature, thereby destroying sin as connected with it; Lev. 1, *throughout*, and Psalm 40:68, with Hebrews 10:4-12; that he may present it to himself, in his Son risen from the dead and glorified, actually unconsumed by being changed and elevated into the divine nature, Exod. 3:2, freed entirely from sin through the death of Christ, Heb. 7:27; 9:26, and thus *not having spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing*. Ephes. 5:27; Jude 24. Also, Ephes. 2:15; Rev. 21:5.

When therefore men ignorant of the truth would, under the influence of the principles of human nature, and confirmed in these by the all-prevailing Manichean sentiments, contend for God conferring upon evil never-ending existence, either through the supposed natural immortality of soul or through the immortality which man is made to [235] possess in the resurrection of Christ, God himself assails and overthrows every such figment by asserting, as we have just seen, the supremacy and all-conquering efficacy of his goodness. He assails it also in express terms: *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil*. 1 John 3:8. As if God had said, "All ye who, ignorant of the nature, extent, and subordinating virtue of the divine goodness, would assert the everlasting perpetuation of sin and death, and the other consequences of Satanic agency, and this either in consequence of Christ's original creation, John 1:3, or subsequent redemption of man, 1 Peter 1:18,19, thereby degrading Christ to the rank of *the minister* or servant of sin, Gal. 2:17, — the most effective minister or servant indeed that could be, seeing that, except for his interference in creation and redemption, sin and death could never have been supplied with victims, — learn this, that instead of making his appearance to confirm the reign of sin and death over all or any, Jesus came to destroy utterly their existence and reign; and that he hath utterly destroyed them by swallowing them up in his own righteousness and life everlasting. Rom. 5:21; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:26,54; Rev. 1:18. The necessary consequence of which is, that from the Divine state of existence upon which Jesus himself hath entered, and into which he ultimately introduces all persons and things likewise, Heb. 6:20; Rev. 21:5; and Psalm 8:6-8, sin and death, with every other work of the devil, are for ever and completely excluded. Rev. 21:4,27. Did I say excluded merely? This is too faint a term adequately to express my meaning. Into Christ's heavenly state sin and death cannot enter, because, in consequence of the [236] existence and establishment of that heavenly state, sin and death shall no longer have any being. Having been cast into *the lake of fire*, they shall be in it completely swallowed up and destroyed. Rev. 20:14; also Heb. 12:29. Indeed, in consequence of the making of all things new in my well-beloved and glorified Son, no state of things can exist hereafter but that heavenly state by which the earthly one shall be entirely and for ever superseded. The *old heavens and the old earth* shall then have *fled away*, and *there shall no longer be found any place for them*.<sup>102</sup> Rev. 20:11; 21:1; Isaiah 65:17. These heavens and

this earth, with sin and death the works of the devil, as having been of the number of the *things* that might be *shaken*, shall be *removed*; and this, that the *new heavens* and the *new earth*, with righteousness and life everlasting, — their glorious and inseparable characteristics, — as *things which cannot be shaken, may remain.*" Heb. 12:27.

<sup>102</sup> If he have not already seen the work, the accomplished and popular author of the "Physical Theory of Another Life" may probably smile when I inform him, that, more than a century since, the Rev. Tobias Swinden, M.A., Rector of Cuxton, in Kent, published a book, entitled, "An Enquiry into the nature and place of Hell," — one of the most curious theological productions that I ever read, — in which he maintains, that the Sun is the place in which future and everlasting torments are inflicted. And yet, why should Mr. Swinden be an object of contempt to Mr. Taylor? For, in what, pray, does the theory of the former differ essentially from his own? Both suppose the everlasting continuation or perpetuation of this present state of things, or of something like this present state of things. That is, both agree in investing a state of things which is shadowy with the attributes of one which is substantial. But by so doing, do they not both equally bring themselves under the lash of the rebuke administered by our Lord to the Sadducees? Matt. 22:29-32. And by so doing, do they not both equally contradict the inspired record, which declares that the old heavens, no less than the old earth, shall pass away? Why then should the former be an object of ridicule or censure to the latter? Both stand equally condemned by the scriptures of truth. — By the way, I perceive from a passage in the first volume of the *Omniana*, that Swinden's curious book had attracted the notice of that *helluo librorum*, as well as distinguished *litterateur*, Southey.

[237] True it is that when God, ultimately revealed in his all-in-all character, shall new-create the whole of the old creation, and of course unregenerate men as having constituted a part of it, Rev. 21:5, he will bestow graciously the *penny*, or same amount of blessedness, upon those who *have not borne the burden and heat of the day*, as he had bestowed previously upon the church. For those who are brought in at *the eleventh* or last *hour* are ultimately put upon a footing of equality with the persons who were called *early in the morning*. And thus it happens that the goodness of God, originally manifested in the case of the church, is ultimately manifested in the same way in the case of all. Does the prospect of this excite murmuring and repining against *the good man of the house*? Unquestionably it does so in every mind where the selfish and contracted principles of human nature exist and prevail. That goodness should go on progressing until it extends its triumphs to all, is what by the Φρονημα της σαρκος, *the mind of flesh*, cannot be tolerated. To every one, however, actuated by such principles, the short, emphatic, and pungent language originally intended by our Lord for the Jews is strictly applicable: *Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil, (selfish or contracted,) because I am good? (liberal, unbounded in my beneficence).* Matt. 20:13-15. It is when this highest conceivable state of things shall have been realized — when divine goodness shall have attained to the fulness and climax of its manifestation, in the bestowment of life everlasting upon all — that the state of things which we [238] now with our creature apprehensions look forward to as *last* or *ultimate*, shall appear to have been *first*, or to have been a state of things which has existed unchangeably from everlasting. *The last shall be first, and the first last;* Matt. 20:16; or all change and all progression shall, in the completeness of divine manifestation, be discovered to have been but the shadowy representations of eternal and unchangeable realities.

Two texts of scripture, one occurring in the Old and the other in the New Testament, — both as a matter of course being agreeable to the whole scope and tenor of revelation, — may appropriately enough be proposed as a summary of my argument with reference to this subject.

1. *The Lord or Jehovah is good.* Psalm 100:5.

2. *God is Love.* 1 John 4:8,16.

God being GOOD, and also being LOVE, not only are eternal torments an impossibility, but the final conquest of *evil* and *enmity* which are affections merely of creature nature, by *goodness* and *love* which are affections of the divine nature, becomes clear even to demonstration. For, besides that God must ever be able to control and subdue the creature and whatever belongs to him, and to render all temporary manifestation of creature nature subservient to his own eternal glory, how should the grand scriptural doctrine advocated in this work, viz., that God in all respects stands opposed to man, be true, unless everlasting goodness were contrasted with temporary evil, and everlasting love with temporary hate? God, instead of being opposed to the creature, would resemble him, if by doing evil and shewing hatred to the creature for ever by eternally tormenting him, he should confer upon the creature principles of evil and hatred, everlasting existence. [239] This of course cannot be. And therefore infinite goodness and infinite love, or the scriptural view of God as infinitely good and infinitely loving, is at variance equally with the doctrine of eternal torments, which would confer immortality or the divine nature upon evil and hatred, and with the doctrine of the annihilation of the unregenerate, which by withdrawing certain creatures from the divine goodness and love, would necessarily represent these attributes as finite or bounded in their exercise.

It now only remains for me to sum up the contents of this section in such a form, as to place the inversion of which it treats briefly and yet distinctly before the eye of the reader.

We have shewn, that naturally the evil of mankind as a whole attempted to overcome the goodness of God by means of the transgression of Adam; and the evils of the fleshly church to overcome the goodness of God by means of the rejection of Christ crucified and glorified on the part of the Jewish people. And that spiritually God's goodness overcame the evil of the church in its fleshly state, by raising it to a heavenly and spiritual state; and ultimately overcomes the evil of the world by making all new in himself, clothing all with the divine nature, and thereby rendering all the recipients of his bounty. Thus in spite, nay by means, of every exhibition of creature evil, God acquires opportunities for the display of his efficacious and all-conquering goodness. The inversion, then, will stand thus: —

Natural Order.

1. Evil on the part of mankind in general strives to overcome good.
2. Evil on the part of the church strives to do so.

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Spiritual Order.

1. Goodness on the part of God overcomes evil in the case of the church.
2. Goodness on the part of God overcomes evil in the case of all.

But there is another way of working and bringing out the same inversion which may not be uninstructive or uninteresting to my readers. Naturally, goodness was displayed, in the first place, in the Paradisaical benefits conferred on Adam; and evil, in the second place, by that transgression which brought these desirable although merely fleshly benefits to an end. Whereas, spiritually, evil was displayed, in the first place, on the part of the church, in crucifying and then rejecting *the Lord of Glory*; and goodness, in the second place, steps in to sweep away evil and all its consequences completely and for ever. Human mind in appearance overcame goodness displayed naturally, by means of the introduction and confirmation of evil; divine mind, on the other hand, in reality overcomes evil in every form, — whether displayed naturally in the world, or supernaturally in that church which in Old Testament times had been separated by God to himself, — by means of good. Ephes. 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9; 20:14; 21:5. The inversion, thus stated, assumes the following form: —

NATURALLY.

Goodness, first; — Evil, second.

SUPERNATURALLY.

Goodness, second; — Evil, first.

Or,

NATURALLY.

Goodness, in the first place; evil, in the second.

[241] SUPERNATURALLY.

Evil, in the first place; goodness, in the second.

Thus as goodness made its appearance at first, although only in a mere natural form, God having pronounced all that he had made to be *good*; Gen 1:31; so shall evil, in every form of its manifestation, when the drama of this world's history comes to be wound up, be found to have been merely the means of goodness prevailing at last supernaturally, completely, and for ever. Rev. 21:3-5.

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## SECTION XIII.

### CONCLUSION.

There are certain inferences clearly and undeniably deducible from the doctrine which it has been our endeavour to establish upon a scriptural basis, in the foregoing part of this Essay. Two of these, as appearing to us to be of principal importance, we select for illustration. — It results from the establishment of our doctrine,

In the first place, that we only acquire correct and scriptural views of divine truths, in proportion as we are enabled to see these standing in complete antagonism or opposition to theological notions which are in favour with and current among mankind.

We began this treatise by shewing, that the doctrine of the mutual antagonism of divine and human things is involved in hints innumerable which lie scattered throughout the inspired volume; we then adduced our blessed Lord himself as having expressly taught it; Matt. 22:41-45; we brought under notice various facts related in scripture which embody it; we directed attention to the remarkable saying, *the last shall be first, and the first, last*; Matt. 20:16; we answered an anticipated objection, founded on the analogy subsisting between things human and things divine; and we closed this part of the subject by pointing out the principle upon which the doctrine in question rests.

Not satisfied with treating the subject of divine inversion [243] in this general way, we have gone at great length into illustrations of it: shewing that, in exact agreement with the principles laid down, opposition of things human to things divine, and of things divine to things human, in reality characterizes every theological topic. For instance: — To suppose Reason able to receive and acquiesce in divine Revelation; the human will free, or in some sense independent of the divine will; the spread of human civilization and improvement, and of fleshly notions of religion, to be identical with the advance of the church and mind of God; the enjoyment of eternal life to depend in some one way or another on a condition or on conditions to be performed by the creature; the selfish and narrowing tendencies of human mind to imply that selfish and narrowing results are aimed at and accomplished by divine mind; and divine Goodness to be obliged to succumb to, and ultimately to enter into some sort of compromise with, the spirit of Evil; are, as we have just seen, the notions respecting these different topics which naturally and necessarily are adopted by mere human mind. But in regard to every one of

them, God appears in scripture presenting views which stand in decided and diametrical opposition to those entertained by man. His revelation of himself, so far from being according to and confirming the anticipations of fleshly reason, — nay, so far from agreeing with the notions of God which man with the volume of inspiration in his hands by nature invariably takes up, — actually in every case contradicts, and whenever it takes effect destroys, the ideas which naturally have a place in man's mind concerning him; to his will is the will of man entirely, constantly, and with deadly enmity opposed, Rom. 8:7, and yet, to his will is the will of man so thoroughly subject, that [244] even in its wildest aberrations from the path of duty, and in its most insane attempts to control and thwart God's purposes, it is merely fulfilling what God's *hand and counsel had determined beforehand should be done*; Acts 4:28; the advancement of human civilization and human religion is seen to be one of the almost infinitely diversified forms in which man withstands God, — being an attempt on the part of the fleshly-religious to substitute improvement of human nature, for God's own supersession of human nature by the divine nature; the expectation of enjoying heavenly blessings *conditionally* is seen opposed to the divinely revealed fact that they are bestowed *unconditionally*; Rom. 6:23; fleshly notions of God's bestowing natural blessings upon all here, in subserviency to his bestowing spiritual blessings upon a few hereafter, (the fleshly interpretation, for instance, of such a passage as 1 Tim. 4:10,) are found to contradict his actual procedure, which is to bestow spiritual blessings upon a few now, in subserviency to his bestowing them upon all ultimately; 1 Cor. 15:22-28, Phil. 2:10,11; and the fleshly idea of evil overcoming goodness, by contriving to establish for itself eternal duration in the case of the unregenerate, necessarily opposes the scriptural facts of evil having been virtually brought to an end in the cross of Christ, and of his goodness in the long run actually overcoming evil, and destroying it along with all the other works of the Devil. 1 John 3:8, also, Rom. 12:21. Such, then, are instances, and very striking ones too, in which the theological notions of man expressly contradict those views of the divine character and procedure which God himself hath seen meet to reveal.

Let it not be imagined or alleged, that the instances of [245] divine inversion which I have adduced exhaust all that might be said on this interesting and important theme. So far from it, I know not a theological topic discussed in the ample pages of Turretin, Pictet, or Limborch, concerning which the same thorough opposition between what is human and what is divine might not be evinced. Indeed, the principle contended for by me being absolutely true because divinely revealed, how could matters be otherwise? Consider, farther, that it has its basis in the very contrast or opposition subsisting between God and man themselves. Man sprang from the dust of the ground, Gen. 2:7, being *of the earth, earthly*; 1 Cor. 15:47; God's origin, if origin can be predicated of him "who origin has none," is from heaven. Ibid. Man is a being of a day, and during the period of his transitory existence is in a state of incessant change; God is from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeably the same. Psalm 90:2; James 1:17. Man is necessarily a subject; God as necessarily knows and can know no superior to himself. Rom. 11:33-36. In short, God himself is revealed as standing in all respects completely opposed to man. Under such circumstances, it is absolutely *impossible* that the doctrine which I contend for *should be untrue*. It has its foundation in the contrast essentially subsisting between the Creator and the creature. For if God and man thus necessarily stand opposed in the very constitution of their respective beings the one to the other, must not every thing that belongs to the one in the same way stand opposed to every thing that belongs to the other? Must not every divine attribute stand opposed to every human quality? And such, indeed, when the language of scripture comes to be understood, do we find to be the case. [246] It is only by degrading the Creator to the level of the creature, and thereby getting rid of the contrast or opposition in question, that any thing which has even the appearance of a successful assault upon the grand principle contended for by me in this work can be made.

Thus, then, the antagonism or opposition subsisting between that which is of man and that which is of God, has its origin in the necessary antagonism or opposition subsisting between God and man themselves. And as this antagonism or opposition pervades every narrative, every prophecy, every

parable contained in the sacred volume, it is indispensably requisite that it should be understood before the scriptures themselves can be understood. Ignorance of it leaves the whole word of God involved in inextricable confusion — covers the whole with a veil of impenetrable darkness.

The antagonism in question is mutual. It is no less a fact that *the mind of flesh* or mind of man is *enmity against God*, Rom. 8:7, than that the mind of God is enmity against man. Levit. 26:23-28. Psalm 7:11. These are *contrary the one to the other*. Gal. 5:17. Warfare, collision, deadly strife is of such a state of things the necessary result. And in what is all this to terminate?

Reconciliation it is evident is out of the question while both natures, the human and the divine, continue to exist separately. For, as the enmity between them is essential, clearer manifestations of both natures, so far from diminishing that enmity, must tend only to bring out clearer manifestations of it. Engaging in deadly conflict with each other, what then is to happen? Why that, unless the conflict is to be protracted to eternity, one of [247] them must go to the wall. The nature of the creature must supersede the nature of the Creator; or the nature of the Creator must supersede the nature of the creature. Can any man, knowing the inequality of the conflicting forces, hesitate for a moment as to which of these two supposed results is destined to be realized? When the egg ventures to measure its strength with that of the stone, which of the two must be the sufferer?<sup>103</sup> When *the briers and the thorns set themselves in battle array against him who is a consuming fire*, what can fail to be the issue? Isa. 27:4; Heb. 12:29. And then the questions arise: — Understanding the divine nature to supersede creature nature, how is this to be effected? And if effected, how does it imply the reconciliation of the one with the other?

<sup>103</sup> Allusion to a Chinese Proverb.

Here it is that the glory of the mediatorial economy comes into view. Man's nature opposes God's nature; and God's nature opposes man's nature. But the conflict is to end; and the two natures are to be reconciled, nay, more, are to be everlastingly united. For this purpose it is that the Being is revealed, who is not a mere creature, but is both the Creature and the Creator: the Being in whom, therefore, both natures appear in a state of union. Clothed with man's nature, he renders it, in the first place, perfectly obedient to God, Philip. 2:8, which, in the mere creature, it never either had been or could be; Rom. 8:3, with 7; and then, in the second place, he sacrifices or destroys it. Levit. 1, *throughout*; Isa. 53:10; Heb. 9:26; 10:5-10. The existence of man's nature thus coming to an end, the enmity of that nature to God, as a matter of necessity, comes to an end likewise. But this is not all. Through the medium of the resurrection of the [248] Lord Jesus, the nature of man, — previously sacrificed and yet in the very act of sacrifice rendered perfectly righteous, Rom. 8:3, 10:4, Phil. 2:8, — is changed and elevated into the nature of God; or beings who, clothed with human nature are the enemies of God, are, when clothed with the divine nature in Christ Jesus, converted into the friends of God, or rather are thereby rendered one with him for ever. 2 Cor. 5:21.<sup>104</sup> Although, then, the natures of God and man cannot be brought into a state of reconciliation and union *directly*, seeing that, viewed *directly* with reference to each other, irreconcileable antagonism or opposition is their essential characteristic; they are nevertheless reconciled and united *indirectly*, through the medium of the death and resurrection of the Son of God. But this union does not imply the perpetuation of both natures. That is, it does not imply that the two natures continue to have throughout eternity a distinct and separate existence. On the contrary, it is by means of the destruction of the inferior nature of man — by means of its being absorbed by and thereby changed into the superior nature of God — that the reconciliation, or rather the union of both is effected. This shews, in confutation of every species of Manichean theory, that the mutual antagonism or opposition of the two natures is merely temporary; and that the existence of it, even for a time, is in subserviency to ulterior and eternal purposes. For instance: man's temporary opposition to God is subservient to the glory of God, or to the eternal manifestation [249] and illustration of the divine character. Rom. 9:17; 11:36. And it shews farther, that the opposition of God to man is of a totally

different description from the opposition of man to God; in other words, that God and man stand opposed to each other in nothing more decidedly than in the opposite kinds of their respective and mutual oppositions. Man's opposition to God is real hatred, and could only be gratified to its full extent by the destruction of God, and the frustration and overturn of all his schemes. Rom. 8:7. Psalm 2:1-4. Acts 2:22,23, &c. &c. God's opposition to man, however, is real love: assuming the aspect of hatred to man's nature, and exhibiting the effects of that hatred in the infliction upon it of entire destruction, only that by means of destroying what is in itself hateful, God may acquire the opportunity of conferring upon man his own divine nature, which is in itself infinitely lovely. Man's enmity to God is, then, hatred; whereas God's enmity to man is love. This is, indeed, the grand antagonism or opposition subsisting between the two natures: *hatred* opposed to *love*; *love* opposed to *hatred*. Man's nature would, if possible, effect its own perpetuation, and this, even at the expense of God's destruction;<sup>105</sup> that is, it would perpetuate what is hateful and destroy what is lovely. Whereas, God, actually effecting the destruction of human nature, and of sin as necessarily and inseparably connected with that nature, by means of so doing bestows upon persons, who have temporarily the sinful and hateful nature of the creature, everlastingly the sinless and lovely nature of the Creator. Thus the opposition or enmity of [250] hatred to love misses its aim, and comes to nought; whereas the opposition or enmity of love to hatred gloriously and everlastingly triumphs. This mutual antagonism or opposition of creature nature to the divine nature, and of the divine nature to creature nature, of course can only last while creature nature is continued in existence; and therefore when, in the fulness of ages, the creature nature with all its enmity comes to be absorbed or swallowed up, through the medium of the divine righteousness wrought out by the Redeemer, in the nature of the Creator, the enmity or opposition of the creature nature is of necessity completely and for ever brought to an end. Love then triumphs in the everlasting destruction of hatred, its temporary and subservient rival; and the everlasting union of the nature of hate with the nature of love, not the perpetuation of both natures for ever in a state of discord, rivalry, and enmity the one to the other, is the blessed and glorious result.

<sup>104</sup> This is the true import of the burning bush seen by Moses, Exodus 3. Human nature in the Son of God was burned, in his atoning sacrifice; Leviticus 1; and yet, human nature in him was not in one sense consumed, seeing that, in his ascension to his Father's right hand, it appeared clothed upon with the divine nature. 1 Cor. 15:54; 2 Cor. 5:4.

<sup>105</sup> Proved by the crucifixion of him who was *the Lord of Glory*, 1 Cor. 2:8, *the Lord from heaven*, Ibid. 15:47, and *God manifest in flesh*. 1 Tim. 3:16.

Understanding these views, and being enabled to apprehend the strength and depth of the scriptural grounds upon which they are based, the grand doctrine contended for in this work is seen shining with all the light and lustre of self-evidence. Man's nature being essentially opposed to God's nature, and God's nature to man's nature, of necessity the order of human things must be the inverse or opposite of that of divine things, and the order of divine things the inverse or opposite of that of human things. Man opposing God, God opposes man: the system of opposition on the part of the creature to the Creator being met and counteracted by a corresponding system of opposition on the part of the Creator to the creature. Levit. 26:23,28. Also Galatians 5:17. [251] Hence every exhibition of the properties of creature nature, whatever it may be, gives birth to or rather is the occasion of an exhibition of some counter or opposing properties belonging to the divine nature.<sup>106</sup> This mutual opposition however, like the creature nature in which it originates, is but temporary. As it had a beginning, so also shall it have an end. Having sprung up in connexion with the mediatorial system, with the mediatorial system it terminates. The divine being, whose representative or rather shadow the opposing creature was, Rom. 5:14, in due time takes hold of the nature of that creature — brings it for once in himself into a state of perfect and glorious harmony with God — and then crushes it under his feet for ever. Gen. 3:15. Opposition to God is thus overcome, overwhelmed, and ultimately extinguished in the very nature by which that opposition had been exhibited. Rom. 8:3.<sup>107</sup> And as all are in, and are one with him, who

thus extinguished sin in his own atoning sacrifice, Acts 17:28, compared with Coloss. 1:16,17, it follows of necessity, that in extinguishing opposition to God in himself personally, he extinguished it likewise in all. Ephesians 2:15,16. Also 2 Corinthians 5:14,15. Human nature had by its tendencies and outward manifestations, as contrasted with the tendencies and outward manifestations of the divine nature, contributed to shew what the Creator was as contra-distinguished from the creature. Rom. 9:17. This was all that was required [252] of human nature. This was all, indeed, that it was capable of effecting. Having accomplished this, it had accomplished the only purpose for which its temporary being had been conferred upon it. Proverbs 16:4. The Creator, then, by his manifestation in flesh, death, and resurrection from the dead, having first of all by his own obedience to law exhibited creature nature in a state of harmony with him, took back into himself that nature and the state of things in connexion with it, which had originally emanated from him; and by this re-absorption of what at the utmost was merely *shadowy* into himself the glorious and divine *substance*, necessarily swallowed up evil as a consequence of and as inseparably connected with the shadowy nature, completely and for ever.

<sup>106</sup> Compare Gen. 3:1-6, with Matt. 4:1-11. There will be seen opposed to each other a nature which, as it could be overcome, so it actually was overcome; and a nature which, so far from being capable of conquest by temptation, was itself the conqueror of temptation, and of every other species of malignant influence.

<sup>107</sup> See also John 3:14,15.

Another result necessarily involved in the doctrine, which it has been our object throughout the preceding part of this treatise to establish, is,

In the second place, that the mind of any given individual must itself become the subject of a divine, that is of an inverting process, before it can be qualified to enter into and apprehend the view of a mutual and decided opposition subsisting between things that are human and things that are divine.

Beautifully and perfectly adapted is the fleshly mind of man to the conceptions which he is obliged to form of earthly and fleshly things. These he understands, and these he is enabled to arrange in systematic order, by means of the faculties which he naturally possesses and his cultivation of those faculties. But the very circumstance of the adaptation of the human mind to human ideas, occupations, and pursuits is what essentially and totally disqualifies it for rising to conceptions of things [253] that are divine. Man's mind, fitted to think of and reflect on earthly things, and to consider them merely as they appear to him or after an earthly fashion, necessarily adjusts heavenly things to its own apprehensions, and clothes them with a mere character of appearance; in other words, necessarily drags them down to the level of its own earthly capacities, whenever it would form any idea concerning them. It considers them as it would consider earthly things; or in the same order, and under the same aspect, which earthly things present to it. But in so doing, it necessarily goes wrong. For divine things are not *apparent* as human things are, but *real*; and their order is not *the same* as that of human things, but *the very opposite*. Hence in conceiving, or rather in attempting to conceive, of divine things, by dint of its mere natural faculties, man's mind always and of necessity goes astray. Presenting divine things to itself and to others in the order which is natural to itself, it presents them in an order, and clothed with attributes, exactly *the opposite* of those which they possess in reality, and which are perceived to belong to them by those whose minds are enlightened from above. False views of things that are divine — views the reverse of those which are true — are thus necessarily incident to every mere fleshly intellect, however powerful, however enlightened, however highly gifted it may be. Under such circumstances, what is to render man's apprehensions of divine topics correct? Evidently, an adaptation of their minds to the topics themselves. In this way, and in this way only, can a correction of their naturally false views of divine things be accomplished. As by having human minds men are qualified to conceive of human things, so must they pos-[254]sess divine mind before they can be qualified to conceive of divine things. Not divine mind, in the sense of a complete superseding thereby of human mind, while they are sojourners in flesh; but divine mind, to a certain extent and degree. And just in

proportion to the degree in which divine mind is conferred upon them, will be their capacity to acquire and make known divine ideas. 1 Cor. 2:14-16; Heb. 4:12. But divine things themselves stand, as we have just seen, to human things in the relation of inversion or opposition. Or, to express myself otherwise, divine things themselves occupy an order the inverse or opposite of that of human things. Just so must the earnest of divine mind when bestowed upon any one, — and it is only the earnest of divine mind which can be possessed by any one while in flesh, — occupy an order the inverse or opposite of that of human mind. As divine topics themselves are inverted or opposed to human topics, so must the mind which is to be enabled to conceive of divine topics as they are, be itself inverted or opposed to human mind. In a word, it is only the individual whose mind has undergone a process of inversion, or, if the phrases are more likely to be comprehended, whose mind has been changed and revolutionized by the superinduction upon him of the earnest of divine mind, who, as possessed of divine and thereby inverted capacities, is qualified to understand and judge of divine and thereby inverted topics.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Divine mind appears to be inverted to creature mind. In reality, however, it is the creature mind which is inverted; the divine mind being the true and uninverted form of mind.

Observe what I am actually contending for. Not that the mind of any one requires to be made divine in order to [255] his acquiring profound or sublime notions of earthly things, or even of heavenly things viewed after a fleshly fashion. And this, because, for such purposes, the human mind as it naturally exists is perfectly and admirably adapted. Nay, I am not contending for such a gift of divine mind to the members of the spiritual church as deprives them of the power, under the influence of fleshly mind, of looking at earthly things just as others around them do, and as they themselves formerly did. All that happens in the case of these specially redeemed ones is, that while in flesh they have the earnest of a divine principle superinduced upon them. This divine principle is adapted to divine things. Itself an inversion of human principles, it alone qualifies to comprehend things which stand in an inverted order to human things. But in so far as mere human things are concerned, human principles still operate.<sup>109</sup> It is true, that where the inverting process has taken place, human things are thenceforward seen bearing the relation of shadows to things which are divine — that a power, greater or less according to circumstances, of discriminating between human and divine things is bestowed — and that human things, losing the importance in our estimation which once belonged to them, cease to be pursued with an ardent and exclusive attachment. Having [256] had conferred upon us the earnest of what is divine, we have thereby contracted a sort of contempt for what is merely human. All this is perfectly true. Indeed, all this is a necessary consequence of the superinduction, so far as it goes, of divine mind upon human mind. But still, the change in question in no way whatever interferes with the legitimate exercise of human powers, faculties, and propensities. The earnest of divine mind, as itself the inverse or opposite of human mind, adapts itself to divine topics, as standing in an inverted or opposite order to those which are human; while human mind still remains the principle by which human topics are apprehended, and human pursuits are carried on.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> The philosophy of this — and where is *true* philosophy to be found except in the Scriptures? — is given by our Lord himself, in these memorable words of his, addressed to Nicodemus: — *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.* John 3:6. By flesh here I understand, as I conceive myself to be perfectly warranted in doing, not only fleshly body, but also fleshly mind. See Rom. 8:5-7. Assuming this to be one sense of the words, how clear is it that, as from spiritual mind alone spiritual effects can proceed, so in endeavouring to account for principles, views, dispositions, and practices of a fleshly description, we have no occasion to look higher than to fleshly mind for their origin.

<sup>110</sup> Upon the whole, I mean; for, in the light of divine things, human things are far better apprehended than they can be by mere human mind alone. See what I have said in note page 48, and on page 57.

Approaching now to the close of my work, and unwilling to harass farther the minds of my readers, too long kept upon the stretch already, I have no intention to enter at any length into the *minutiæ* of the

process, by which that inversion which is implied in the possession of the earnest of divine mind is brought about. Suffice it to say, at present, — assuming as true what it will be my business to prove at some future period, and in some other publication, that the mind of man consists of three great principles, referred to in scripture respectively as *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*; 1 John 2:16; and illustrated successively, in the way of contrast, in our Lord's three temptations. Matt 4:1-11. These three principles may be for the sake of brevity denominated sensation, intellect, and conscience; that is, the appetitive or sensual, the intellectual, and the reli-[257]gious principles. All of them, be it observed, are fleshly. And the order in which they are developed in man is that in which I have enumerated them: first, the principle of the senses or sensation; secondly, intellect or reason, as being supplied with materials for its operations by the senses; and, in the third and last place, conscience roused into exercise and activity by the previous development of the two just-mentioned faculties. Thus it is only, first, by means of the laying in of a stock of materials by the senses, and then of the consequent operation of intellect thereon, that it is possible to reach and excite the fleshly conscience. But in the conferring of divine principle, or in the commencing of that new-creation in the individual, which is destined to terminate only in himself, and all things besides being entirely made new, the process is completely inverted. The natural order of development is, we have found, 1st, sense; 2ndly, intellect; and 3dly, conscience: but the spiritual order is, 1st, conscience; 2ndly, intellect; and 3dly, sense. It is on conscience, in the case of the members of the heavenly church, that God first takes hold — it is there that he begins the work of new-creation. Through conscience, as having had first conferred upon it the earnest of the divine nature, intellect is then operated on; and this, in consequence of human forms of thought being gradually superseded by the divine forms which are put upon it. And last of all comes the operation of the divine nature upon the senses, and upon the body as more immediately connected with them. In this way do we discover that, not only in general is the mind of the members of the church, in so far as it is rendered divine, inverted or made to stand in opposition to human mind; but that even in the very mode of divine [258] operation in thus changing or inverting the mind, — as beginning with conscience, through it operating upon intellect, and thence still further operating downwards upon sense, — the process is the inverse or opposite of that in which these three great faculties of human mind are naturally developed and brought into operation.

So important are the facts briefly adverted to in the immediately preceding paragraph, that they afford the only satisfactory solution of a difficulty which has long puzzled theological professors no less than private Christians. I mean, the order or progress of divine influence in the case of the spiritually elect. On what principles, in what manner, and by what steps, does the Spirit of God proceed when he separates the members of the heavenly church from the world? Ignorance of the fact of God's new-creating the conscience, the third and highest of man's natural faculties, in the first place; and of his operating downwards, by means of the previous new-creation of it, secondly, upon the intellect; and, lastly, upon the senses or conduct, in the inverse or opposite order of their natural progress and development, lies at the bottom of nine-tenths of the nonsense, mysticisms, and inconsistencies by which treatises on the subject of vital godliness are distinguished. It gave rise to such enquiries as that started by Halyburton, in a short essay commonly appended to his celebrated and profound work on the deistical controversy, viz., "Whether has Regeneration or Justification the precedence in order of nature?" and to the exceedingly unsatisfactory conclusions in which such enquiries commonly result. Understanding what I have just been explaining, the puzzle is found to be solved, and every difficulty attaching to the subject is at once and for [259] ever removed. God may in early life, at a period when the understanding is either not at all or but feebly developed, new-create the conscience or highest fleshly principle of human nature; Judges 13:5; Isaiah 49:1;<sup>111</sup> and it may happen likewise in the case of adults that the conscience is made new, and yet that but slender traces of this fact appear in its operations upon the understanding. Human teaching and a variety of other causes may contribute towards one of the children of God, — one who is indeed *renewed* in conscience or in *the spirit of his*

*mind*, — holding many sentiments that are extremely erroneous respecting divine truth. In every such case it is to him who has been divinely taught the *rationalia* of the subject obvious and certain, that the individual admitted to have been so renewed as to his *conscience*, is only renewed as to his *understanding* in proportion to the degree in which his views correspond to the views of God himself. That is, only in proportion to the degree in which his views of divine things stand opposed to the views concerning them which are suggested by mere human reason; and, consequently, only in proportion to the degree in which the divine principle which has already taken hold of his conscience, inverting or changing it, is found operating downwardly upon his intellect, taking hold of it and thereby inverting or changing it likewise. Human views of religion can never be the result of the teaching of the Spirit of God; and, therefore, wherever they make their appearance, even although I should grant a renewal of the conscience, yet as such views always and necessarily indicate the operation [260] of fleshly mind, John 3:6, I must deny that the renewed conscience has as yet been productive of any very powerful influence downwardly upon the understanding. So satisfied am I of this, both from scripture and from a tolerably enlarged observation and experience of such matters, that although far from being inclined to deny, in all cases, the possession of the earnest of divine mind by professors of religion holding erroneous sentiments, the fact of such erroneous sentiments being held by them always leaves me more or less in doubt as to their exact position. Such persons may be mere hypocrites. Perhaps, more correctly, may be men of mere fleshly minds. Or, they may be men in whom the divine nature, which has made new their consciences, has not yet to any great degree descended into and renewed their understandings. For the making new of the understanding, where that privilege has been conferred, can never exceed the degree in which it apprehends, or rather the degree in which it is apprehended by divine truth. Two things may always with truth be predicated of adherents to *many* earthly and corrupt views of Christianity; (held along with *some* divine views, for without *some* views that are divine making their appearance, there is no evidence of a renewal of the mind *in adults* at all;) first, that adherence to gross errors in regard to divine things by the understanding can never consist with a large measure of divine principle existing in the conscience; seeing that if a large measure of divine principle existed there, it could scarcely fail to operate more efficaciously than on such persons it appears to do, in the purgation and removal of error: and, secondly, that in cases where the understanding is but triflingly renewed or enlightened, the influence of divine principle upon the [261] practice can be but trifling; seeing that it is only through the medium of a divinely enlightened understanding that a divinely renewed conscience can operate downwardly upon the senses and external conduct. Such persons may abstain from much that is outwardly evil under the influence of terror and other fleshly and slavish principles; but except through a spiritually-enlightened understanding, and the mental freedom which is therewith connected, it is impossible for *divine principle* to operate upon the practice. 2 Corinth. 5:14,15. Where divine principle in the conscience operates with even a comparatively slender degree of power upon the understanding, the conviction on the part of adults of their enjoying justification and eternal life in Jesus the second Adam glorified, as certainly as they are subjected to sin and death in him who was the first or earthly Adam, or what has been sometimes denominated *assurance of faith*, is necessarily the result. And, therefore, while I have but too good reason to suspect, that the great majority of those who profess to cherish doubts and fears concerning God's love to themselves personally are self-deceivers, if not even hypocrites — persons who have never had the earnest of divine principle introduced into their consciences; I have equally good reason to suppose and assume, that among those who are in reality the children of God, and as such have been renewed as to their consciences, but who nevertheless occasionally experience doubts on the subject of personal salvation, as in such cases we cannot but perceive a comparatively feeble spiritual illumination of the understanding, so there cannot exist a very ample or enlarged measure of divine principle in the conscience. To recur to what I have already observed: a conscience in which [262] divine principle resides in the highest degree is most likely, other circumstances being equal, to be productive of a highly enlightened spiritual understanding; and a conscience and understanding under the influence of

divine principle in a high degree are most likely, other circumstances being equal, to exercise the most decided and abiding influence upon practice.

<sup>111</sup> Passages which I at once admit are properly applicable to Christ: as is also Psalm 51:10. It is only for the applicability of the *same principle* to members of the spiritual church that I contend.

Entreating the attentive reader's pardon for the great length at which I have trespassed on his patience, and thanking him for the indulgence shewn me, I now proceed to sum up the whole.

Man is a changeable being; God is unchangeable, or the I AM. In this opposition of their respective essences is laid the basis of opposition in all the manifestations of their respective natures. Through sin is this opposition, previously latent and unobserved, rendered apparent and stimulated into exercise. Man by aiming to rise in the scale of existence and to be as God, and thereby breaking the only divine prohibition which had been imposed upon him in his state of innocence, proclaimed himself to be the enemy of God. Gen. 3:1-6. See Rom. 8:7. God, in consequence of this procedure on the part of his creature, compelled as it were to appear in the character of man's enemy, proved to him the vanity and fruitlessness of his attempt, by not only preventing him from soaring to a higher state, but by even depriving him of the lower state in which he had been originally created. The sentence pronounced and in due time executed upon him was, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Gen. 3:19. Thenceforward throughout the scriptures, and in the course of providence, every person and every event merely afford occasion for manifesting the rooted and [263] mutual enmity subsisting between the two natures, the human and the divine. In every respect is the one displayed as standing in opposition to and in the inverse order of the other. And as there is opposition between the two natures themselves abstractly considered, so whenever they are brought into contact, by the conferring of the earnest of the divine nature upon any descendant of Adam, deadly collision and warfare between them is the immediate and necessary result. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.* But although the enmity of the creature to the Creator is in reality hatred, the enmity of the Creator to the creature is merely one mode of the manifestation and expression of love. In other words, what may be denominated in a qualified sense God's enmity to man, is merely one mode of displaying the essential and constituent principle of Jehovah himself. GOD IS LOVE. 1 John 4:8,16. God's enmity to the creature no doubt carries on the face of it one most marked characteristic of vengeance, namely, that it issues in the destruction of creature nature. *God is angry with the wicked;* Psalm 7:11; Rom. 3:10-19; and, therefore, he can be satisfied with nothing short of *washing his feet in their blood.* Psalm 58:10. To men he assigns, as the only appropriate *wages of sin*, death. Rom. 6:23. The enmity of God to man therefore is, in respect of the punishment which it inflicts upon human nature, evidently and awfully real: indeed, being justified by the character of the nature to which it stands opposed, it ought to be, as it actually is, satisfied and appeased only by the utter and everlasting destruction of that nature. But *God is love.* This, so far from being a mere *attribute* of God, in [264] reality constitutes his everlasting and unchangeable *essence.* The language of the Holy Ghost is not that he *displays* love, but that he *is* love. Enmity to man on the part of God, therefore, must be an expression of this his essence, that is of Love. And as opposed to man in every other respect, so also in this, that while man *hates him*, he must *love man.* And so he does. The manifestation of his Son in flesh, and all the consequences thereof, — whatever aspect of hatred to man they may at first sight and to the untutored and unenlightened mind assume, — are really expressions of love, and means of giving to that heavenly and divine principle full and everlasting effect. 1 John 4:8-10. For two grand purposes the Son of God appeared: first, that by taking hold of human nature as his own, he might acquire the opportunity of destroying it or bringing it to an end in himself; and, secondly, that he might accomplish this in the best of all possible fashions, after having previously rendered that nature righteous in himself, and thereby deserving of life and immortality. Rom. 8:3. All this Jesus accomplished. Philip. 2:6-11. And he was enabled to do so, because human nature, like every thing else, had no existence apart from him; Coloss. 1:16,17; man *living, moving, and having his being*

*in him.* Acts 17:28. See John 1:3. In his death, then, human nature died or was destroyed: God's enmity against it, and against sin as inseparably connected with it, having been in his sacrifice indulged, if such a phrase may be permitted, to the very uttermost. Coloss. 1:20-22. And in his resurrection and ascension, human nature, previously destroyed on the cross, was resuscitated, not in its earthly form, but changed and elevated into the divine nature. Psalm 2:7. Luke 24:50-52. Acts [265] 9:1-8. Rom. 6:9,10. 1 Corinth. 15:22,47-49,53,54. Phil. 2:9-11; 3:21. Rev. 1:5. In this way is the opposition between God and man ended; and yet so ended, as in a certain sense to stamp this opposition as eternal. For man had appeared in every age as God's enemy. Rom. 8:7. Also Matthew 16:23.<sup>112</sup> And yet God was all along and in reality man's friend. 1 John 4:8. In which character, heaping benefits, first, temporal, Matthew 5:45, Acts 14:17, and then eternal, Psalm 68:18,19, Rom. 5:21, upon man, he hath manifested himself in thorough and everlasting but blessed contrast with his creature. Isaiah 55:8,9. Gal. 5:17. How sweet in connexion with the whole of this subject to observe, that as in the *all in all* or highest character of Jehovah love alone exists and is displayed, hatred in love being engulfed or swallowed up for ever; so all previous manifestations of God, especially of enmity on his part to man arising from manifestations of enmity on man's part to him, or manifestations of God's nature and man's nature as occupying a posture of mutual inversion, opposition, and defiance, are, in that glorious issue of the whole, seen to have been only a series of temporary expedients calculated for shewing to creatures, in such a way as while possessed of creature nature they were capable of apprehending, that God as love is in a state of perfect harmony with himself and with all besides.<sup>113</sup> And, further, that as the *all in all* character of Jehovah, in which [266] every previous and inferior instance of divine manifestation merges and terminates, is actually the character in which he hath existed unchangeably from everlasting; so in this way, in the sublimest sense of the word, is it evinced, that *the last is first*, and *the first last*, or that the *all in all* state of manifestation of God which is *last* to the creature necessarily viewing matters prospectively, existed *first* or from eternity before inferior manifestations began; and, conversely, that the state which was *first* or eternal with God, is *last* in the apprehension and enjoyment of man.

<sup>112</sup> Examine Matt. 16:23, in connexion with Rom. 8:7, in the Greek; and especially *Satan* and *savourest* in the former, with *enmity* and *carnal mind* or *mind of flesh* in the latter. This is the second time that I have directed attention to the two passages.

<sup>113</sup> Let Jeremiah White's profound, eloquent, and glorious work on the *Restoration of all things* be consulted.

[267]

## APPENDIX.

### A.

AFTER putting this work into the hands of the printer, — indeed after the printing of it had been considerably advanced, — I had my attention drawn by a highly respected Christian friend to a pamphlet on "Opposites," written on the principles of Emmanuel Swedenborg, by the late Rev. John Clowes, of St. John's Church, Manchester. Mr. Clowes was a gentleman who in his life time enjoyed considerable local notoriety, and concerning whom some most interesting facts will be found recorded in one of the articles, entitled, *Autobiography of an Opium Eater*, which appeared in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine a few years ago. My friend was kindly solicitous that I should peruse the tract before the publication of my own work. A kindred feeling was experienced by myself, owing to what I had said of Swedenborg towards the beginning of Section VI.

Well, I have perused Mr. Clowes' work, and with no ordinary degree of attention either. In no one respect, however, do I see reason to retract, or even to alter, anything which I have expressed concerning Swedenborg and his system. On the contrary, my recollections of the New Jerusalem theory, as connected with the learned and ingenious foreigner's own statements, are amply confirmed

by my more recent perusal of his follower's production.

There is not a single person taught from above, and endowed with a reasonable share of natural understanding, [268] who, after going over and making himself acquainted with our respective sentiments, will venture to assert that they are in any leading particular identical.

Take the following as instances of their contrariety: —

1. Mr. Clowes, like other Swedenborgians, finds his opposites in human nature itself, in the distinction subsisting between body and mind. To me the opposites are the nature of man and the nature of God: human or fleshly mind having nothing spiritual about it, any more than human or fleshly body has; both being equally and thoroughly *soulical*, ψυχικα, and as such opposed to divine body and divine mind, which, and which alone, are both and equally *spiritual*, πνευματικα. 1 Corinth. 15:44-46. See also 1 Corinth. 2:14, James 3:15, Jude 19.

2. The *opposites* of Mr. Clowes are, when examined into, found to be merely *differences*.<sup>114</sup> That is, man in one state merely at the utmost *differs* from man in another state of his earthly existence; the *difference* between the one state and the other being so slight as to admit of his present state of existence, when improved, being perpetuated for ever. Opposites with me, however, are what their name really imports: the nature of man being in my apprehension really opposed to the nature of God, and the nature of God really opposed to the nature of man; and the natural opposition being such, and carried out to such an extent, that instead of terminating in the perpetuation of man's nature, whether bodily or mental, it terminates in its destruction, through the medium of its new-creation, by the divine nature.

<sup>114</sup> See my sixth section.

3. It is asserted by Mr. Clowes, as a matter of necessity, indeed it is one of the leading dogmas of the sect whose principles he upholds, that the will of man must be free, and that on this supposed fact of the freedom of man's will is absolutely dependent, not merely his moral responsibility, [269] but his enjoyment of spiritual and heavenly blessings. On the other hand, while I admit the *apparent* freedom of the will of man, as being the image or shadow of the *really* free will of God, I deny — and I defy to the proof of the contrary — that the will of man, or of any other creature, is or by any possibility can be free.

4. According to Mr. Clowes, sin entered into the world in diametrical opposition to the Creator's desires and wishes, solely under the influence and by means of the instigation of Satan: the evident, indeed the necessary conclusion from which is, that the original aim and purposes of God were thereby frustrated. According to the writer of these lines and of the preceding sheets, and this too backed by the high authority of God himself, sin, although in all respects opposed to God, is nevertheless like every thing else brought into existence<sup>115</sup> through the purpose and sovereign actings of him *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*; Eph. 1:11; and who, having sin and sinners always subject to his control, uniformly renders their existence subordinate to the display of his own heavenly and divine perfections. Rom. 9:17. Gen. 45:5.

<sup>115</sup> Such as that existence is.

5. Mr. Clowes conceives sin to be possessed of everlasting existence, in which case, of course, it appears as God's rival. The writer of this work has no hesitation in regarding and representing sin as having only a temporary existence; Psalm 104:35; as being God's slave, not God's rival; Isaiah 45:7; and as being brought to an end by being swallowed up in divine and everlasting righteousness, as soon as the purposes for which it has acquired its limited and restricted being are fulfilled. Rom. 5:21. Also 1 Corinth. 15:23-28. Hebrews 9:26.

6. The system of Mr. Clowes compels him to represent the creature as capable of eliciting the

principles of salvation [270] out of his own human nature; that is, as capable of pursuing a course of self-denial and devotedness to God, under the influence of his own freedom of will, which shall terminate in his acquiring the glory of becoming in part at least his own Saviour. The system of scripture, which is the system advocated in these pages, makes salvation to be the work of the Creator alone, irrespective and independent of all actings on the part of the creature; and represents it as consisting, not in the development of principles previously existing in human nature, for in it *there is no good thing*, Rom. 7:18, but in the superinducing upon human nature of the principles of the divine nature, and in the superseding thereby of the former by the latter. I Corinth. 15:49,54. 2 Corinth. 5:4.

Should any one feel inclined to question the accuracy of my representation of Mr. Clowes' sentiments as given in that gentleman's treatise on "Opposites," the work itself is in existence and is open to his perusal. Let him satisfy himself. Had circumstances permitted, I might, by means of copious extracts from the learned Swedenborgian's essay, have materially added to the proofs of my assertion of the decided contrariety subsisting between his sentiments and mine. — By the way, that I may not be supposed to speak with any view to disparage the merits of its author, I may observe, that the treatise on "Opposites" is the production of an able, perspicuous, and most affectionate mind. Mr. Clowes' disposition, judging from his works, (for I have read other treatises of his besides that in question,) and from what Mr. De Quincy says of him, must have been gentle and amiable in the highest degree.

## B.

To my dear, Christian, and highly esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Conolly Cowan, of Weston-super-mare, near Bristol, [271] I have been recently laid under no small obligation, by his having honoured me with the perusal in MS. of five most interesting and instructive lectures of his, on *the Non-eternity of Hell Torments*, delivered in Bristol in the course of last spring. The least I can say is, that the reading of these productions has been to me a source of great pleasure as well as profit. Such specimens of clear, close, and powerful scriptural argumentation, it has not been my lot for a long time to encounter.

Admiring as I do both the lectures and their author, it grieves me to have even the slightest remark to make derogatory to their merits. A regard to truth, however, compels me to speak out. Valuable as Mr. Cowan's lectures are in almost every respect, they err in common with the productions of many other able men in asserting, — perhaps I should express myself more correctly, as well as more gently, were I to use the phrase *suggesting*, — the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked and unregenerate. This distresses me. I know that the view is held by my friend with the most perfect integrity. Nevertheless he is wrong. Indebted as, with that noble spirit of candour which distinguishes him, he confesses himself to be to Mr. Newman, now of the New College, Manchester, for many of his most valuable notions of divine truth, and benefited as he cannot fail to have been by constant and familiar intercourse for a considerable length of time with a mind so large, so liberal, and so enlightened, as that which Mr. Newman evidently possesses, I fear that my friend's very candour and nobility of nature may have contributed to throw him off his guard, and to lay him open occasionally to the reception of errors mingled with truth. Upon no other principle can I account for productions so clear, so masterly, and so conclusive, in other respects, as the lectures are, terminating in an avowal on the part of their respected author of his belief in annihilation. Mr. Newman [272] he acknowledges himself indebted to for many of the delightfully scriptural views therein presented. Would to God that while penning these instructive discourses, there had been suggested to my dear friend another and a higher, as well as a more gratifying issue of his glorious discoveries, than that of the everlasting perpetuation of the reign of death over a large proportion of the human family.

I have now lying before me a remarkably well written pamphlet, entitled, "On the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ." It was published by Chilcot, Bristol, in 1835, and is the production either of Mr.

Newman or of Mr. Cowan; I am not exactly sure which. I remember that Mr. Cowan at the time disclaimed something; whether the authorship, or the origination of the sentiments, I now forget. I have laid beside this, a production of my friend, the Rev. Wm. Burgh, of Dublin, entitled, "Christ our life, or the scripture testimony concerning immortality," published in Dublin in the above mentioned year. The publication was anonymous; but its author never, that I am aware of, affected concealment. It is the offspring of an able, enlightened, logical, and elegant mind. Both pamphlets have had from me another and a most careful perusal. Insinuating as is done by the former, and broadly stating as the latter does, the doctrine of annihilation, I have endeavoured, with all impartiality, to weigh their respective arguments in its favour. But the more I reflect, notwithstanding the edification in other respects which these writings afford me, the more I am satisfied, that in contending for such a doctrine as scriptural they are mistaken, and that it is not difficult to point out the source of their mistake. They are mistaken; for were their notion correct, the conquest of Jesus over sin and death, instead of being complete would only be partial: it being evident that, on their principles, only the sin of some would be swallowed up in his divine righteousness, and only the [273] death of some in his divine life. And the source of their mistake it is not difficult to point out: they want to see sin and death got rid of, and they fancy that their object is attained to in the annihilation of a large proportion of those beings to whom sin attaches; not perceiving that, in this way, instead of getting rid of death, their system represents its sway as perpetuated over such beings for ever. How can persons holding such sentiments conceive our blessed Lord to adopt in its glorious and unqualified extent the language of Hosea, and say, *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: death, I will be thy plagues! grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance shall be hid from mine eyes?* 13:14. Or how can they profess to adopt the language of Paul, and declare as a confession of their own faith, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive?* 1 Cor. 15:22. Alas! in their apprehension of matters, the grave, so far from being robbed of its tenants by the triumphant inroad made upon its territories by the Son of God, is closed over many of them, and keeps them imprisoned in its adamantine dungeons for ever.

But perhaps the gentlemen to whom I am alluding fancy that they obviate, if not entirely get rid of, my objections to their theory, by reminding me that, so far from denying, they believe that the whole human race shall be resuscitated or made alive again in Christ Jesus; and that it is as so raised again, or in their resurrection state and form, they shall stand at his tribunal, there to be tried and there to have sentence pronounced upon them according to their works: the wicked or unregenerate portion of mankind having, through the medium of the resurrection and not otherwise, annihilation inflicted upon them as their appropriate punishment. Such is the statement with which I am likely to be encountered. And yet, so far from the difficulties which attach to the system of annihilation being in this way diminished, they are [274] actually multiplied; for, besides that the most cogent of my original objections remain, others are superadded. The new difficulties with which this scheme is embarrassed are such as, 1st. — To raise intelligent creatures temporarily, that thereafter they may be plunged eternally into nothing, besides the exceedingly speculative character of the notion, and the transient glimpse of their criminality which to the parties so punished would be afforded, appears to be a species of refined and demon-like cruelty. 2nd. — Could not the same power of Christ's resurrection which was thus able to raise intelligent beings a second time to life, also confer upon them, in the very act of their resurrection, the divine nature of that glorious being through whom they were resuscitated? A first birth conferred upon them human nature; could not this second birth confer upon them the divine nature? 3rd. — Is it the part of goodness, — and *God is good*, Matthew 19:17, — to visit evil with evil; and especially, to visit the impotent evil of a creature perpetrated in time, with the omnipotent evil of the Creator extending to eternity? 4th. — In what kind of bodies are the unregenerate to be raised, condemned, and punished? If in Adamic bodies, then have we, not only without but in opposition to scripture authority, conformation to the image of the earthly represented as an effect of Christ's resurrection power. And if in bodies like to the glorified body of Christ, how can such bodies be

punished, especially with annihilation? 5th. — If raised again to be punished with annihilation, then have we human beings punished twice for the same offence or offences; it not being alleged that the unregenerate, during the short period of their supposed resurrection state, become chargeable with any new transgressions: that is, they are punished, first, with temporal death, and secondly, with annihilation or eternal death, — although, by the way, no such phrase as *eternal death* occurs in the sacred volume. See Macknight on Rom. 6:23. [275] 6th. — To raise intelligent beings again with an Adamic nature, that is, with a sinful nature, even for the purpose of annihilating them, would be of course, however temporarily, to restore the existence of sin. But can the blessed Jesus so far prostitute his resurrection power as to render it subservient to sin, and himself *the minister of sin*, by restoring to existence, even for a moment, that which his soul hates, and that for which while on earth he died? Would this be, besides, to render the power of his resurrection subservient to the subduing of all things to himself? Phil. 3:21. If it be said, they are not raised in Adamic or sinful bodies; then as raised in bodies conformed to the resurrection or glorified body of Christ, they are not fit subjects of punishment. See my "Dialogues," dialogue 4th, pp. 151,152. 7th and lastly, to suppose God to punish by annihilation or eternal death, beings raised by the power of Christ's resurrection, necessarily gives rise to the question as to the possibility of beings so situated being liable to the stroke of death. Christ himself, we are informed, *being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him*. Rom. 6:9. Query: can any one be raised from the dead, or experience the power of the resurrection, without being set free, by that very fact, from the possibility of ever being brought again under the dominion of death? Remember, by the terms of our present argument, it is by the power of Christ's resurrection that the beings in question are raised again. And can an event which of necessity sets free from the power of death in the case of one, have an exactly opposite effect in the case of others?

Such are some of the additional difficulties with which those who contend for a resurrection of the wicked and for their subsequent annihilation encumber themselves. All the while my grand original objection remains untouched and in full force, viz., that, as according to this system, Jesus annihilates the wicked, or subjects them to the punishment [276] of eternal death, our blessed Lord, so far from being the destroyer of death, is presented to us in the strange, repulsive, and unscriptural character of confirming its reign over millions of intelligent beings for ever! To raise them before annihilating them, is no doubt to ascribe some power to his resurrection even in their case. But it is, as we have just shewn, to do so at the expense of introducing new and insurmountable difficulties; and to give to this edition of the theory of annihilation the aspect of springing from mere human ingenuity, and of being got up merely to serve a turn.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am as decidedly opposed to the doctrine of any natural immortality belonging to man, as Messrs. Cowan, Burgh, and Newman can be. And this, because the doctrine, so far from having any foundation in, is expressly contradicted by the word of God. *In Adam all die.* 1 Corinth. 15:22. Besides I, as distinctly and decidedly as they can do, ascribe life and immortality to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the power of his resurrection. Ibid. Also Isaiah 26:19; I Tim. 1:10. Witness the two editions of my "Three Questions Proposed and Answered," (especially the answer to Question second,) the first edition of which was published as far back as 1828; my "Assurance of Faith," published, 1833; and my "Dialogues," especially Dialogues 4th and 5th, published, 1838. Consequently my agreement so far with the gentlemen alluded to, or their agreement with me — it matters not which — is not of yesterday. Here, however, our agreement ends. Resurrection through Jesus implies, not annihilation of the wicked, but the very reverse. It implies, I admit, annihilation of their creature or Adamic nature, and thereby of sin and death as affections of that nature; for in being raised, they are raised no longer wicked and dying, or conformed to Adam, but righteous and living, or conformed to Christ Jesus. That is, in experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection, by being themselves raised, [277] they are of necessity conformed to him risen and glorified. This annihilation in them of Adam's

nature is, however, not a result of the annihilation of themselves, but is by means of their new-creation, or of the superinduction upon them of the divine nature. It is by putting incorruption upon that which is by nature corruptible; and immortality upon that which is by nature mortal; and, as the necessary consequence, thereby superseding the image of the earthly by the image of the heavenly. 1 Corinth. 15:53,54. Also 49. Also 2 Corinth. 5:4. Wicked are all, whether regenerate or unregenerate, by nature or as Adam's posterity; Rom. 3:10-19; righteous are all, whether raised by Jesus as spiritual Abraham or as spiritual Adam, in consequence of experiencing the power of his resurrection. Rom. 3:22; 1 Corinth. 1:30; 15:22; Rev. 21:5. And as by being raised through the power of Jesus risen and glorified, all are conformed to his image, by having sin swallowed up in his divine righteousness, so likewise are all through the same means conformed to his image, by having death swallowed up in his divine life. 1 Corinth. 15:26,54. 2 Corinth. 5:4. Rev. 21:4.<sup>116</sup> Death is no doubt in the case of the unregenerate, just as it is likewise in the case of the regenerate, in a certain sense rendered eternal: but eternal death, if such an uncouth species of phraseology may be permitted, is the death or swallowing up for ever of death itself, through the medium of conferring eternal life ultimately upon all; and not what supporters of the annihilation scheme contend for, the monstrous idea of the perpetuation of the existence and dominion of death for evermore.

<sup>116</sup> "And there shall be no more death."

I would, for further explanation of my views on this all-important subject, refer particularly to my "Dialogues," pp. 123-128, and pp. 213-216. The former passage beginning, "Well, then, I will throw my question, &c.," and [278] ending, "attribute of himself the glorious Creator." And the latter, beginning, "You have hinted that, &c.," and ending, "beyond this present time state of things." In the seventh chapter of my "Assurance of Faith," some remarks are made on the same subject which may be worth considering. I am the more cautious, however, in referring to this latter work, as, notwithstanding the general correctness of the views contained in it, I was at the time of writing and publishing it, 1830-1833, ignorant of some most important scriptural truths since opened up to me. Among others, I was not aware of faith having been imposed as a law or command on the church only during the period of the Apostolic ministry; and of the second sin, or sin against the Holy Ghost, as having been capable of being committed only during that period.

Notwithstanding the animadversions upon the views of annihilationists, which, with a view principally to the guarding of myself against misapprehensions and mistakes, I have considered it proper to make, it gratifies me to be able to subscribe unqualifiedly to the following beautiful and emphatic language occurring towards the commencement of the pamphlet, entitled, "On the Hope of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ," one of those above referred to: — "We are not taught that religion is a system for improving the present world; for if that were its *direct* object, a most signal failure is predicted. Think ye that I am come to send peace upon earth? I tell you nay; but a sword. It is no mere improvement of the present state that the all-wise Jehovah designs, but a complete rebuilding of the whole from the foundation. *Behold! I make all things new.*" Most true, say I. The reader has only to glance over section ninth of this work, especially pp. 95-99, in order to perceive, that — without any plagiarism on any part of which I am conscious, the sentiments there expressed having been held by me for the last eighteen or [279] nineteen years — the author of the pamphlet quoted and the author of these sheets are, in so far as respects the particular subject treated of, perfectly at one. Long, long have I scouted the notion of the subserviency of the manifestation of divine truth to an improvement of human nature and the introduction of a fleshly millennium, as a notion opposed to scripture as well as to matter of fact. Human nature, while it continues human nature, is unchanged and unchangeable. (I am almost ashamed of the *truisim*; and yet, considering the class of persons with whom I have to deal, I scarcely know any better way of expressing myself.) And unchanged and unchangeable in nothing more than in its irreconcileable and deadly hostility to God and things that are *really* divine. Rom. 8:7. One of Christ's objects in appearing upon earth and causing his gospel to be proclaimed, was not to

lessen this hostility, but to afford the most decided opportunity possible and conceivable for its display and exercise. That this sentiment of mine is not new is apparent from the fact, that it constitutes the 7th of the grounds upon which the Presbytery of Glasgow in its wisdom saw meet to convict me of heresy, in September, 1825. See my "Remarks," and my "Memorial," second edition, both published in the course of that year.

To return to my dear friend Cowan's MS. lectures, *on the non-eternity of Hell torments*. I have most earnestly to express my hope that he may be induced to commit them to the press. Such productions are not every day to be met with. If published, members of the church of the living God cannot fail to be benefited by the perusal of views so admirably expressed, so cogently argumentative, and supported by so strong and appropriate a phalanx of scriptural quotations and references as his are.

[280]

C.

The remark made by me in the last article of the Appendix, respecting the condemnation, in my case, of a most important doctrine of scripture, by a Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, — a condemnation extending to other articles equally scriptural, and not only acquiesced in but ratified by her higher judicatories, — suggests to me that it may be neither unimportant nor uninstructive to draw attention to the past procedure of that church in rejecting and condemning certain truths of the word of God, and to the very extraordinary position in which she is at the present moment placed. There appears to me to be a most decided connexion between her former opposition to what is divine, and those evident tokens of the divine displeasure under which she is now labouring. It may be that I am wrong. It may be that what is now happening, although a specimen of the *post hoc*, is not a legitimate instance of the *propter hoc*. Let me concede the *possibility* of this. At least, however, it is a remarkable coincidence, that recent unqualified condemnations of most valuable scriptural truths, by a body of men assuming to take its stand on and to be an authorized expositor of scripture, should have been almost immediately and in a most signal manner followed by the judgments of the God of scripture.

I have long considered the Church of Scotland to be the purest of those bodies of men, established by law, which assume to themselves the character of churches of Christ Jesus. Her professed rejection of a human dictator, and professed subjection to Christ as her sole head and lawgiver, place her far above other and avowedly secularized communities. Superior, however, as in certain respects she is, nevertheless, as an external church, she takes her place in the same category with other bodies similarly characterized. As external, such bodies are all vicious by their very constitution. [281] They are so many attempts to set up "the image of the Beast," Rev. 13:14,15, or of the Mosaic Dispensation, in the shape of external and earthly churches, in opposition to that true church of the Lamb, whose head, whose members, whose constitution, whose residence, whose privileges are all internal and heavenly. Rev. 14:1-5, 15:2-4. But vicious as all established and external churches are, and proceeding as they necessarily do on the principle of trying to rebuild that "accursed Jericho" of Judaism, which God eighteen hundred years ago levelled with the ground, Joshua 6:26, Rev. 18:1-5,18-24, there are shades of difference in point of unscriptural character, and in point of corruption among them. The Church of Scotland is, (should I not rather say, was?) as respects constitution, character, and efficiency, not so many degrees removed from the truth as the Church of England; and the Church of England, with all her secularity of principles and practice, is not just so bad as the Church of Rome. Hence, the Church of Scotland, of the three, has been the instrument the most owned and blessed of God, in spite of her multifrom abominations, to be a means of bringing his chosen ones, always few in number and overlooked by the world, to the knowledge of himself. In proportion, however, to any body of men approaching nearer to the truth and knowing more of their Master's will than do others, appears to be the certainty, in the event of their going astray, of their meeting with severer chastisement at God's

hands. Luke 12:47,48. Upon this principle I have long been satisfied, that when God should arise to the infliction of judgment on those offshoots of the mystical Babylon, Established Churches, he would proceed to execute them in a sort of inverse order, and with an inverse proportion of severity: beginning with the purest, and advancing regularly from it, through such as were less pure, to the most corrupt; lashing the purest most severely, although [282] at the same time taking care that the others should not escape. That is, I anticipated God's commencing with the Church of Scotland; then in due time discharging the vials of his wrath on the Church of England; and last of all consuming that sink of abomination and iniquities, the Church of Rome. The process has begun somewhat earlier than, I confess, I was prepared for. Already, by a course of judicial decisions, has the Church of Scotland, in spite of all her boasted independency of the Crown, been declared to be a mere instrument of state policy, and a mere secular confederacy. This is the first step, in the case of Protestant Established Churches, towards the execution of the sentence, *I will overturn, I will overturn, I will overturn, — until he come, whose right to reign it is.* Ezek. 21:27. The Church of Scotland, whatever may be the immediate issue of the conflict in which she is at present engaged, is sunk to rise no more. Should she be continued as an Establishment, the *prestige* connected with her claim to have the Lord Jesus Christ as her sole head is gone; and, consequently, the amazing influence over the Scottish community which, in virtue of this illusion, she formerly exercised, is now trampled in the dust. It is more likely, however, that after a few more convulsive struggles she will pass away, either to be replaced by some other form of earthly and spurious Christianity, or by the adoption of the voluntary principle. Such will be the fate of the purest and most efficient established body of individuals calling itself a Church of Christ ever yet known. And if *judgment* thus *begin at* what may be considered, notwithstanding all its corruptions, in comparison with others, *the house of God, where shall those, who, as compared with it, rank among the ungodly and sinners appear?* 1 Peter 4:17,18.

That the Church of Scotland has been gradually preparing for judgment, must be apparent to every one who is acquainted [283] with her history, and who is at the same time tolerably well enlightened by *the truth as it is in Jesus*. The cup of her iniquity has been progressively filling, until at last, having reached the brim, it has overflowed. I say not this from a revengeful disposition. Although I have suffered personally at her hands, and, were I actuated by spiteful motives, have no small reason to rejoice in the tribulations which have befallen her, my *feelings* are strongly enlisted in her favour. She was at one time the object to me of something like idolatry; and I am conscious of my affections still clinging to her professed principles, and simple energetic forms. But truth must be asserted and maintained at all hazards, and in opposition to mere feelings. The Church of Scotland is, like other associations of a similar kind, a corrupt and secular body. And having, under pretence of zeal for Christ, opposed for a great length of time his cause, his truths, and his heavenly kingdom, she is now at last experiencing his vengeance.

I have charged the Church of Scotland with setting herself in opposition to the cause and truths of him whom she has all along professed to acknowledge as her head. Let the following proofs of my accusation be considered and well weighed by my readers. With such accumulated evidences of guilt as her previous history affords, surely but a few drops more were at a later period required to make the whole overflow.

She saw meet to condemn many of the most precious truths of the gospel, — some of them, I admit, rather unhappily expressed, — in the persons of the "Marrow Men," as they are called, in 1720 and 1722. See the Acts of Assembly for these two years.

She shewed herself hostile to an attempt to have her own pretended establishment on the Word of God sifted to the bottom, and especially to have the spiritual and heavenly [284] nature of Christ's kingdom obtruded on her notice, when made by John Glas, minister of Tealing, near Dundee, in 1728.

The leniency of her treatment of Professor Simpson, of Glasgow, accused of Arianism, and the

encouragement thereby held out to others chargeable with the same heresy, excite strong suspicions as to the scriptural accuracy of the views of the majority of her office-bearers, as far back as 1729. See Act 6th of the General Assembly of that year.

Her repeated condemnation of the Messrs. Erskines and their adherents, when contending for many most glorious divine truths, and opposing the tyranny of her procedure in her ecclesiastical judicatories, is well known. Acts of Assembly from 1732 to 1740.

In the year 1736 some most valuable truths of religion, and among them the doctrine of the total inability of man by his natural powers to find out the being of a God, implying that the knowledge of God's existence and attributes is solely matter of Revelation, were condemned by the Church of Scotland, in the writings of Professor Archibald Campbell, of St. Andrews.

Then came the reign and tender mercies of "moderation"<sup>117</sup> — a long and dreary period, commencing with the deposition of Mr. Gillespie, in 1752, and extending to 1781, when the system of Principal Robertson and his coadjutors may be said to have received its establishment<sup>118</sup> — during [285] which, by a course of decisions of the most secular, unscriptural, and tyrannical description, many of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, the most distinguished for their piety and general excellence of character, were driven out of the pale of her communion, — mere hirelings were in a great majority of cases introduced into her parishes, — and heresies of every description, among others that of Taylor, of Norwich, widely overspread the land.

<sup>117</sup> "A certain minister being asked the character of a friend of his, who had come up to the Assembly, and particularly whether or not he was a *moderate man*? answered, '*O yes; fierce for moderation.*'" From the preface to the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics" of the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon. The work itself, written in a most caustic style, and yet bearing upon it the impress of truth in every page, was published originally as far back as the middle of last century; but it is well worthy of being attentively perused at the present moment.

<sup>118</sup> Should I not rather say, to 1798? It was in that year that shoals of "moderates" from the remoter parts of the country, having repaired to Edinburgh, assisted their leaders in excluding evangelical ministers of other communions from the pulpits of the Scottish Church, and in passing such sentences as that which excluded Mr. Young, of Legertwood, from his pulpit. Talk these fellows of persecution now? I am not the vindicator of the evangelical party of the Kirk, whose attempts to evade the abominable law of patronage have always appeared to me more like the quirks and trickeries of lawyers than the acts of thoroughly honest and straightforward men. But complaints of persecution from the *moderate* party? Faugh!

John Barclay's honest, manly, and glorious avowal of the doctrine of the Assurance of Faith, or of the personal certainty of their own possession and enjoyment of eternal life as a privilege common to all the children of God, having been virtually<sup>119</sup> condemned by the Presbytery of Fordoun and the other inferior church judicatories, their sentence was ratified by a decision of the General Assembly in 1773. Thereby as far as it lies in man to do so, or rather in as far as he is permitted to do so, was a check put to one of the most remarkable spreads of true and vital godliness<sup>120</sup> which have taken place in modern times. Not a spread of fanaticism or of a mere operation upon human feelings, but of the knowledge of God as he is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ

<sup>119</sup> His certificate was refused. But he had been brought before them on former occasions, on the *direct* charge of proclaiming the doctrine of the "Assurance of Faith." This I perceive from original documents now in my possession.

<sup>120</sup> In the parish of Fettercairn, and the neighbourhood. This took place from 1763 till 1772, while Mr. Barclay was connected with the Establishment. Afterwards, likewise, his labours were blessed to very many.

Can I pass over the procedure of the church courts in the [286] case of Dr. William McGill, one of the ministers of Ayr, whose decidedly blasphemous attack upon the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus, and some other precious truths of Revelation,<sup>121</sup> was, if not directly sanctioned, at all events screened, by a sentence of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, pronounced about 1790, and never enquired into by

the Supreme Ecclesiastical Judicatory?

<sup>121</sup> An attack made in a work now lying before me, entitled, "A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ," Edinburgh, 1786. What Scotchman knows not the influence which the controversy occasioned by this production had in rousing the muse of Burns? See his "Kirk's Alarm," &c.

Also, the usage which the Messrs. Haldane and their friends met with from the General Assembly, 1798? Not that I consider these gentlemen in all respects to have held sentiments and to have adopted practices which the word of God recognises; but that I consider them to have approached somewhat nearer to the truth than those who condemned them, and *on this ground*, as a matter of necessity, to have stimulated the opposition of minds still more fleshly than their own.

A regard to brevity compels me to pass over other instances of the assaults made by the Church of Scotland upon purity of scriptural doctrine, and to come to my own case.

The Presbytery of Glasgow, in 1825, saw meet to condemn the following among other divine doctrines held by me: (their condemnation of myself personally as a heretic was a matter of little consequence, and one which scarcely gave me a moment's concern) — 1st. The perfect unconditionality of eternal life. Rom. 6:23. — 2dly. The sovereignty of Jehovah in the choice of the members of his church, and in the use of the means of conferring the knowledge of himself upon them; or rather, that it is as used by him, not by creatures, that prayer, reading of the scriptures, attending on ordinances, &c., [287] become means of salvation. Rom. 9:15,16. — 3dly. The certainty of eternal life being involved in faith, and being the privilege of all members of the church. Gal. 4:6. — 4thly. The Christian's love to God not being in any respect the cause of God's love to him, but being always and necessarily an effect of the knowledge of the love borne by God eternally towards him. 1 John 4:19. — 5thly. The enmity essentially subsisting between human nature and the divine nature. Matt. 10:34. Gal. 5:17. — 6thly. The fact of Jesus being the subject-matter of prophecy, Rev. 19:10, especially of the book of Psalms. Luke 24:44. See the Appendix to my "Remarks," &c., and my "Memorial," second edition, 1825; in the former of which the charges, and in the latter of which the sentence of the Presbytery, are set down. This sentence of the Presbytery was never investigated into or condemned by any superior judicatory. Am I not entitled, therefore, to regard it as having been ratified by the whole Kirk?<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Sentence was pronounced at Glasgow, on the 22d day of September, 1825. On the afternoon of that day, the great majority of my judges, the members of Presbytery, after having walked in procession to the spot, assisted at the laying of the foundation-stone of a monument to John Knox, the Scottish Reformer. In so doing, they professed in the afternoon their wish to heap honours upon the memory of a man, some of the most precious divine truths proclaimed and contended for by whom, divine truths which God had seen meet eminently to bless, — they had in the morning, in my person, been engaged in condemning! It having happened further, curiously enough, that the man whom they were thus assembled to honour had been the subject of condemnation by the hierarchy of his time! Having addressed the Presbytery, after sentence had been pronounced by their moderator, — himself, by the way, now separated from the Scottish establishment, — I could not help alluding to the striking coincidence between the procedure of my ecclesiastical judges, in condemning in me what they professed to approve of in Knox, and that of the Pharisees, the pious portion of the Jewish people, in *building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous*, whom their fathers had persecuted and slain, while they were themselves ready to imbrue their hands in the blood of the Lord of Glory and his followers, for maintaining nothing else but what Moses in the law, and the very prophets whom they professed to honour, had written. Matt. 23:29-32. See also, Acts 7:51-53.

[288] Not only so, but on June 2nd, 1828, the General Assembly itself, when there was afforded to it the opportunity, had it chosen to avail itself of it, of going into the whole matter, was pleased, besides virtually ratifying the former sentence, to condemn the following additional doctrines of scripture as avowed by me. — 1st. The distinction between soul and Spirit. 1 Corinth, 15:45. — 2dly. The fact of life and immortality coming to the human race, not through Adam, but through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ibid. 22,47-49. John 14:19. And, 3dly. The fact of sin having no eternal existence, as being one of those enemies which Christ destroys, and that even before destroying death. 1 Cor. 15:25,26. Rev. 21:4. (It was not till the following year that I saw, *in a qualified sense*, the truth of universal salvation.) To be expelled from a church thus condemning divine truths, and condemned for holding such truths, was, surely, no dishonour, although calculated to excite painful anticipations as to what the fate of a body so acting was likely to be.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> No man can be more fully alive than I am to the sad imperfections, both as to matter and manner, which attached to many of my earlier statements of divine truth. Indeed, not more decidedly could these imperfections have been condemned by the Church Courts, than they are by myself. Alas! what human being, on such topics, infinite as they are by their very nature, can express himself with thorough accuracy! Had the Church of Scotland, in condemning what was defective in my statements and expositions, pointed out what was true and scriptural, and guarded herself against being supposed to condemn it, under what an obligation would she not have laid me, and with what affection and respect must I not have looked up to her and welcomed her maternal correction? But for a professed guardian of the truth and purity of Revelation to condemn views and doctrines which are really divine, and in their stead to countenance and approve of Pelagian and other creature interpretations — this was too much for me. *My soul! come not thou into the secrets of this or any other secular body; unto such assemblies, mine honour, be not thou united.* Gen. 49:6. How precious to have had imparted to us the knowledge of *mysteries hid from ages and from generations*, Eph. 3:2-5, and to be connected with that heavenly church which, like its head, is liable to no error, labours under no imperfection!

Soon after my own expulsion from the Kirk, followed the [289] condemnation of Messrs. Irving, of London, Campbell, of Row, Baillie McLean, of Dregborn, Dow, of Tongland, &c. The trials and sentences of these gentlemen occurred between 1829 and 1833. I at once admit that many of their notions were absurd, as well as unscriptural; some of them, indeed, decidedly Pelagian. But no care was taken to separate between the precious and the vile, — both having been condemned in the lump. An assurance of faith, founded upon some fancied attempt to take hold of an offered Christ (!) by the creature, was not distinguished from that assurance of faith, or certainty of life everlasting, which is the necessary result of a manifestation of his own character by the Creator to the creature. A supposed death of Christ in behalf of all, which terminates in no advantage to the human race as a whole, but is the increase of their condemnation, affording opportunity merely to a few to elect themselves by believing on Christ, was not distinguished from that actual *tasting of death* by Christ *for every man*, which, through the medium of his conferring the knowledge of himself upon the elect or church in time, terminates in his extending the benefits of his death and resurrection ultimately to all. Besides, precious suggestions of Mr. Irving, such, for instance, as that respecting the sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, were unhesitatingly rejected. I am satisfied that, in reference to this subject, Mr. Irving blundered egregiously. In representing sin as having had an entrance into our Lord's flesh and blood nature, temptation as having had an influence over it, and both sin and temptation as having been successfully resisted only by means of the divine nature with which he was endowed, mistake upon mistake was accumulated by him. But while carefully pointing out Mr. Irving's errors, did the Church of Scotland welcome with avidity what in his statements was true and divine? Indeed, labouring under some very important errors in common with himself, was that church com-[290]petent to the discovery of the principle in which his aberrations originated? He maintained that, while on earth, our Lord's divine person was united to two natures, the human and the divine. Holding this sentiment in common with him, as what is called the Roman Catholic Church has done since A.D. 453, and as Protestant Churches do, how can they, especially how can the latter, avoid the conclusion upon which Mr. Irving, with perfect *vis consequentiae*, forces them? With two natures, one human and one divine, the one from a sinful woman and the other from the sinless Jehovah, must not the former nature have been sinful like its origin? And if so, do not all Mr. Irving's inferences follow?<sup>124</sup> How simple and easy, however, the truth as to this matter. Jesus was the divine person, and was united to two natures, the human and the

divine. But not to two natures *at one and the same time*. He was united to human nature only while on earth; he became united to human nature, changed into and swallowed up in the divine nature, by his resurrection from the dead. The correct statement then is, that the one divine person was, during the incarnation of our Lord, united only to human nature. And now what is valuable in Mr. Irving's suggestions can be received, while his absurdities are rejected. Sin, as having been the child of a sinful woman, necessarily attached to and rested on the flesh and blood nature of our blessed Lord. Psalm 51:5. And it continued to rest on that nature, and to distress and annoy him, until he *put it away by the sacrifice of himself*. But into his [291] nature it never had entrance; upon his nature its temptations never made the slightest impression; nay, by his very flesh and blood nature sin and temptation were constantly and successfully resisted. And how? By help from the divine nature? No. But by *himself* or by his divine personality. God, not man, was Jesus' father. His person, therefore, as derived from his Father, was divine; just as his nature, derived from his mother, was human. Rom.8:3. And his divine person, that is, *he himself*, so thought, so felt, so acted, that sin never made the slightest impression on him, never effected the slightest entrance into him. Matt. 4:1-11. He was the divine man; and as such, his very flesh and blood nature, although loaded with sin, nay, although during the whole of his earthly career having sin attaching inseparably to it, never had any love of sin or *proclivity to it*; but, on the contrary, always hated it, resisted it, and trampled it under foot. How clear and obvious all this to a mind even very ordinarily taught from above. And yet the Church of Scotland could not see it. Mr. Irving had, poor fellow, happened to express himself, in regard to this all-important topic, in a manner that was both incorrect and unhappy. And because he had done so, the Church of Scotland chose to throw overboard, not only his blunders, but along with them the precious divine truth of sin necessarily attaching to and having been borne by our Lord's flesh and blood nature, until by the atonement it was taken away, which he was so anxious in his blundering way to establish.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> These inferences are avoided by that large party of the Church of Rome who maintain the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. But at what an expense! Why, at that of preventing all connexion between sin and our blessed Lord, and of course at that of preventing the possibility of his having taken sin away! And yet, are ordinary Protestants much better? If sin did not attach to our Lord's flesh and blood nature during his earthly career, then, instead of having, as scripture declares, *put it away by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. 9:26, he must have put it away in his conception, — a fact, if true, which rendered his sacrifice unnecessary.

<sup>125</sup> There is much that is truly excellent in a production of the late Marcus Dods, of Belford, on "The Incarnation of the Eternal Word." London, 1831. It was called forth by Mr. Irving's aberrations respecting our Lord's humanity. Valuable, however, as Mr. Dods' work is, it leaves the main point in question untouched, viz., how, admitting the union of the one divine person to *two natures* while Jesus was upon earth, Mr. Irving's conclusions can be avoided.

Such has been the current of opposition to divine truth, [292] on the part of the Church of Scotland, for somewhat more than a century; and so unfit a guardian and expositor of the heavenly word, notwithstanding all her pretensions to the contrary, has she approved herself to be.

Immediately on the heels of the condemnation of certain divine truths, in the persons of Mr. Irving and some more of us, followed the assertion of what has been called her *spiritual independence*, that is, her independence of the State in religious matters, on the part of the Church of Scotland. The famous *veto act*, passed in 1834, was one of the practical fruits of it. In what troubles this has involved the Scottish Establishment is well known. But the blasphemous nature of that assertion of spiritual independence, in which *the act* had its origin, has not, perhaps, been observed and understood by many. The fact is, that it is neither more nor less than an attempt by one of the parties in the church, — of the two, after all the better party, — to enforce its own tricky, erring, and changeable decrees, as if they had directly emanated from, and were actually the word of the true, infallible, and unchangeable God. It is the creature attempting to thrust itself into a sort of partnership with the Creator; and, in virtue of this, attempting to impress upon its own worthless decisions the stamp of divine authority. Impudence, as

well as blasphemy, could scarcely go further.<sup>126</sup> Granted, that it is following out the principle upon which the Church of Scotland is founded. But there is such a thing as God winking, as it were, for a time at enormities, Acts. 17:30, also Ibid. 14:16, which, when the proper period has arrived, he visits with condign punishment. 1 Thess. 2:16; Rev. 17:16. Our ancestors might enforce their decrees in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and might escape; but it does not thence follow that a similar impunity, if we continue [293] treading in their footsteps, is to be our portion. Let it not be overlooked that the sneering "moderates," worldly in their temper, character, and policy, as they always have been, were of some service to "the church" at a former day. They acted almost avowedly upon the principle of her being, what she is, a mere secular institution. And they thus prevented her from doing, as a body, what she otherwise long since would have done, running full tilt *upon the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler*. But *moderation* has for the last few years been at a discount. Although likely soon to recover her ascendancy in that openly secular church which a short while will see established, her influence in the General Assembly has for some time been next to nothing. And the result has been, that the Church of Scotland, after having provoked God to his face by a course of decisions which virtually reject his doctrines, has recently added to her provocations by an insolent attempt to seat herself upon his throne. Well! *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. Heb. 10:31. When any man, or body of men, meddles with what is divine, he or it necessarily incurs an awful responsibility. (My soul, may it be thy privilege always to remember and act on this principle.) And if the result of this meddling be to reject what is divinely true, and to assert for human edicts the rank and authority of divine decrees, as there is something most presumptuous, not to say blasphemous, in the whole procedure, *shall not God be avenged on such a body as this?* Jer. 5:9.

<sup>126</sup> In the Churches of England and Rome they do so; in the latter, certainly.

Whatever views may be adopted as to the cause or causes of the predicament in which the Church of Scotland is at the present moment placed, one thing is certain, that since 1834 she has been constantly in hot water. And instead of improving, matters are daily getting worse. Her troubles are thickening around her on every side. Lawsuit upon lawsuit is harassing her ministers and members. Adverse decisions [294] of the civil courts are every day increasing the difficulties and perplexities of her position. Ministers convicted of theft, drunkenness, and other delinquencies, are bearding her to her face, and, by means of bills of suspension and otherwise, retaining their livings in defiance of sentences pronounced by what used to be deemed competent judicatories. Refractory and deposed presbyteries are now actually, in the full exercise of their jurisdiction, summoning to their bar and proceeding to the trial of her obedient sons. Attempts are being made, by means of the civil process of arrestment of stipend, to starve out of their zeal, or their incumbencies, members of the non-intrusion party. In a word, all is at the present moment in a state of apparently inextricable confusion. What but a schism in the body can be the result? Indeed, in the case of a great number of the clergy of the Church of Scotland, the wish expressed by me in the Dedication to the Presbytery of Glasgow, prefixed to my "Assurance of Faith," published in 1833, seems to be in a fair way of being realized, viz., "that I might have it in my power, ere long, to congratulate its members on having ceased, like myself, to be connected with a worldly Establishment?"

## D.

Sorry should I be to class my dear friend Mr. William Seabrook, of Plymouth, among the number of fleshly millennialists, — for his knowledge and love of the everlasting gospel are too strong and decided to permit any thing of the sort, — and yet, really, I confess myself unable to understand his views, as brought out in that interesting and prettily written little tract of his, entitled, "The Millennium," which, from the copy now lying before me, has, I perceive, passed through six editions.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Mine was published at Dublin, by Tims, in 1839.

[295] Mr. Seabrook is not particularly in fault for this. Besides the possibility of my incapacity to understand him, arising in part from my own dulness of apprehension, his mistakes, if mistakes they be, are those of his system, which he shares with other able and eminent men. Therefore, let me not be supposed to speak censoriously or slightly of one whom I love and respect, who is entitled, indeed, to the warmest affection which I am capable of evincing, — while I proceed to state as briefly and perspicuously as I can, the grand difficulty which lies in the way of my comprehending his views.

What I cannot understand in Mr. Seabrook, in Mr. McNeile, author of seven sermons on the Second Advent of Christ, and in others, is,

Under what circumstances their notions of the millennium are destined to be realized.

Is it in this present world existing as it now is, while human nature is what it now is, and in connexion with a return to the land of Palestine of Abraham's descendants according to the flesh as what they now are? The whole scope of Mr. Seabrook's treatise, and of all the works in favour of a fleshly millennium which I know, points this way.

Or, is it in the world as *made new*, and consequently in a state of things different from and superior to the present? Mr. Seabrook says, page 6th, "The Lord Jesus, in his glorified body, shall reign upon the earth, made anew, for himself and his saints to dwell in." Similar statements occur in Mr. McNeile's work on the Second Advent, &c.

Now, what I want to know is, which of these two evidently conflicting and self-contradictory statements I am to receive as expressing the sentiments of my friend, and of others who profess to uphold the millennial system? — I confess myself totally unable to receive both.

If the former, I am certainly no millennialist. An accurate perusal of Elhanan Winchester's four volumes on prophecy, [296] London, 1789, and of Mr. Pirie, of Newburgh's, views, contained in his works, which are in all leading respects similar to those of Mr. Winchester, — both of them proceeding on the principle of the Israelites being again assembled in Palestine, having the land divided among them, having their temple rebuilt, their priesthood restored, their sacrifices again regularly offered, and so on, — so far from convincing, (and Winchester and Pirie were no ordinary men,) have so disgusted me, that I have scarcely patience to look into another work constructed on the same principles. Were such millennialists right, the Holy Ghost must have committed a sad mistake, in representing the Jews and their system as having incurred final and eternal condemnation; and the shadowy Mosaic priesthood and sacrifices as having been merged for ever in the substantial priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But is it on the earth made new, and in circumstances otherwise new and thereby conformable to the renewed earth itself, that the millennium is to be enjoyed? Then no one can contend for the truth and certainty of the millennial reign of Christ more stoutly than I do. The earnest of it I am already enjoying, in common with all the family of the redeemed born again from above, in my mind made new by having had conferred upon it the earnest of the divine nature; and the fulness of its enjoyment I look forward to, when I shall be not only released from this body of flesh and blood, but clothed upon with my body which is from heaven. 2 Cor. 5:2. Already I reign even on this present earth, by means of the earnest of divine principle within me; I John 5:4; and, hereafter, I shall reign completely and for ever, with the rest of the members of the heavenly Israel, in those new heavens and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Isa. 24:23; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10. Under such circumstances, I am not holding the unscriptural absurdity, [297] so much insisted on by ordinary millennialists, of the mind of flesh, which is essentially enmity to God and which never can be subjected to God's law, being nevertheless, in the persons of Jews and others, made actually *to love God's law, and to yield a voluntary obedience to it*; but, on the contrary, in the heavenly Jerusalem, I contemplate fleshly mind superseded by divine mind, — the prescriptions of law superseded by the constraining influence of

love, — and a reign commenced and progressing, which is to issue in all things and persons ultimately, by means of it, being subjected to God, and like the church itself made new. 1 Cor. 15:27,28; Rev. 21:5. Such a millennium as this, being scriptural and self-consistent, and tending to effect that ultimate subjection and conformity of all things to God to which whatever occurs in the course of God's providence and grace is evidently subservient, I can understand and rejoice in.

Let me hope that this last is the millennium — the thousand years reign — really meant and contended for by Mr. Seabrook. But in the way in which he, in common with many other able men, has chosen to express himself, I confess myself unable to comprehend him, that is, unable to reconcile his evidently conflicting statements.

FINIS.

[The ERRATA has been incorporated into the text.]

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