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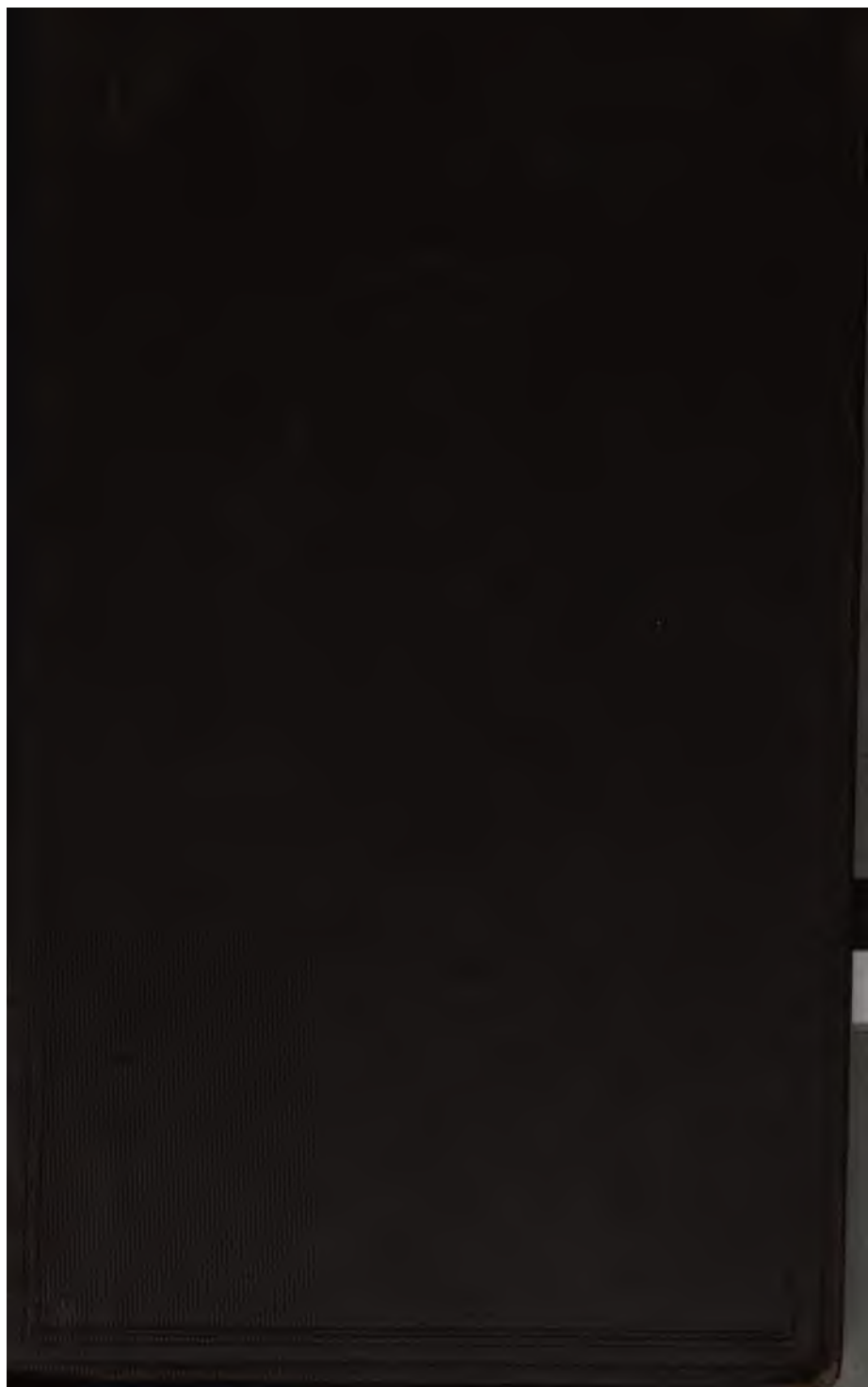
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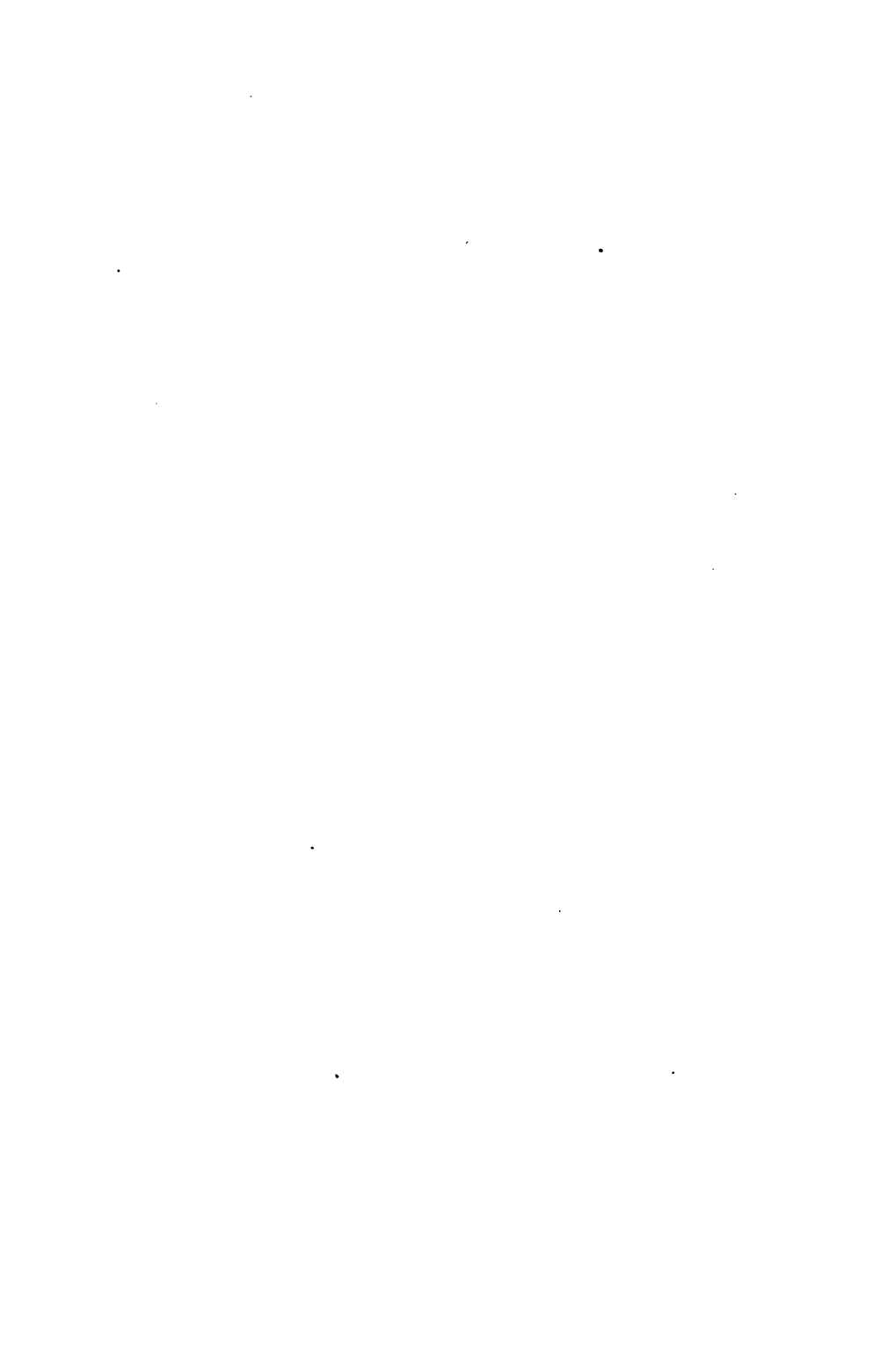
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Mrs. A. A. Stearns.

Brattleboro 29 Apr 23^d 1901





NOTES
ON
THE PARABLES,
OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT,

SCRIPTURALLY ILLUSTRATED AND ARGUMENTATIVELY DEFENDED.

BY HOSEA BALLOU,
Author of 'Treatise on Atonement,' 'Candid Review,' &c.

SIXTH EDITION, STEREOTYPED.
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PREFACE

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE NOTES on the parables were written in 1804. At this period the light which has now become general, among the unprejudiced seekers after the true knowledge of the Scriptures, was as the dawning of the day. With limited discoveries and destitute of necessary resources, the author, at the commencement of improvement in knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, attempted a work, to do justice to which would require attainments and talents to which, after so long a time, he has not the vanity to lay any claims. And yet, the humble hope which he so long ago entertained, and which was expressed in the preface to the first edition, has been abundantly realized. The work has unquestionably been a means in the hand of Providence, of leading many minds to valuable improvements in the knowledge of the Scriptures. It certainly has exerted an influence far more extensive than the most flattering hopes of the author held to view, at the time it was written.

On account of so many of the parables being used, by the believers in endless punishment, to support and enforce that sentiment, the author of the Notes was induced to study them with special reference to the question, whether they might not, with more proprie-

ty, be applied in a different manner. Of this fact he became fully satisfied ; even as much so as he is now. But though he entertained no scruples on that point, he was not so happy as to be fully satisfied, in every case as to the true intent of the parable. In this situation, he cautiously endeavored not to apply any parable to a subject, which was not found to be embraced in the system of truth which the Scriptures clearly and evidently support. Little harm is done by applying a parable to a subject to which it was not intended by the author to apply, provided the subject to which it is misapplied be a truth clearly supported by either Scripture or man's experience ; but to misconstrue any passage of the divine testimony, so as to give support to what is not true, is unquestionably, no small damage ; and if the error be of magnitude, whereby our heavenly Father is represented in an unlovely character, or our confidence in his goodness diminished such misconstruction is not only a reprehensible violence on the Scriptures, but a dishonor to their divine Author.

Some instances, illustrative of the foregoing remarks, are here presented. These words in Matt. xii, 20, ' a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory,' may be understood only to apply to the kind and gentle spirit which Jesus manifested in the days of his ministry on earth, without doing any material injury to the text, even if by a bruised reed and smoking flax the then waning power of the tribe of Judah were intended, as the Notes apply them.

We may notice the parables in Matt. xiii. 44-46, which read thus : ' Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field ; the which when a

man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Notwithstanding the author of the Notes applied these parables as the honest convictions of his understanding dictated, at the time he wrote, and although he now confidently believes in the truth of all the doctrine communicated in the notes and their illustrations; yet he is not now as confident as he was then that these parables were not intended by the Saviour to teach his disciples and the people, that in order to possess themselves of the kingdom of heaven, by which he meant the new dispensation which he came to introduce, they must part with all that they held dear in the world. And he now thinks himself able to give more than mere plausible answers to those objections to this application of the parables, which are suggested in the notes. Applying these parables which way of the two we may, we feel satisfied that no material injury is done to the Scriptures thereby; provided that in applying them in one way, care be taken not to carry the meaning so far as to oppose the Scriptural truths embraced in the other.

The second edition of the Notes was published in 1812. At this time, the practice of applying many of the parables to prove and enforce the doctrine of endless punishment, had scarcely at all abated. The work was not in the market (a small edition of one thousand copies only having been published,) and by the believers in the impartial goodness of our heavenly Father much called for. This induced the author to add the

ILLUSTRATIONS to the original work, and to dispose of the copyright, that the publisher might feel interested in keeping a supply in the market. At this time the author saw no cause for varying the application of any of the Parables, from that made in the first edition; and being all the time engaged in controversy with the opposers of Universal Salvation, he was led to manifest more of the spirit of defence and opposition, in the illustrations, than at this day, when the controversy seems nearly decided, and the arguments which have been relied on to support the cruel doctrine of endless punishment, nearly all abandoned, seems either called for or justifiable. In relation to this circumstance, the reader of the present time will make a reasonable allowance.

The third edition was published in 1822, in the State of Maine, far distant from the author's residence, which allowed him no opportunity to revise or correct the work, both which he would have been glad to do at that time. During the time, in which the present edition has been in press, the feeble state of the author's health has rendered it impossible for him to make all the corrections which better health and more leisure would have enabled him to do.

To conclude: the reader may be assured that the sentiments maintained in the following sheets, are according to the honest convictions entertained by the author, truths fully and clearly supported by divine revelation, and of a character calculated to administer no small consolation to the sincere believer.

THE AUTHOR.

Boston, July, 1831.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

CHRISTIAN READER,

To mention all the motives which induced me to publish the following Notes, would extend this epistle beyond its proper limits ; yet, it may be satisfactory to note some of the most important.

It has appeared to me for some time, that something of this nature was as much needed, among christian people, as any thing that could be offered from the Scriptures ; and that, on account of the very different manner in which public teachers have treated the Parables of the New Testament, and the disagreeable consequences arising therefrom.

Perhaps it may be said, without any offence to the feelings of the reader, that most of the ideas imbibed by people in general, in divinity, are received from the pulpit. And while one congregation is attending to explanations of the Parables in one way, another is entertained with different ideas on the same passages. When those ideas are received, they form quite a difference in the opinions of christians ; this dissimilarity of sentiments engenders twice as much disaffection in the heart, where nothing contrary to charity ought to be found ; and this disaffection is like a hot bed to the seeds of contention, and roots of bitterness.

And although I do not expect so favorable a consequence to result from my little Pamphlet, as a general agreement among christians, in respect to the Parables ; yet, I entertain an humble hope, that it may make, at least, an approximation towards so favorable an object ; perhaps by inducing some more able writer, who possesses more leisure for writing, to favor the public with a treatise on so worthy a subject.

In my travels through the country in discharge of duties enjoined by the ministry of the Saviour of sinners, I have met with more opposition to the gospel preached to Abraham, from false notions of the Parables of the New Testament, than from any other quarter. Often, after travelling many miles and preaching several sermons in a day, I have found it necessary to explain several Parables to some inquiring hearer, when my strength seemed almost exhausted. At such times, I have thought a volume, such as the reader has in his hand, might save me much labor. And I have often said to myself, if God will give me a few weeks leisure, I will (with his assistance) employ them in writing Notes on the Parables. This favor has at last been granted, though it was by depriving me of that degree of health which was necessary to the performance of those journeys which I had already appointed ; yet, preserving so much as to render me composed in my study.

I am persuaded that a just knowledge of the Parables is almost indispensably necessary to a knowledge of the doctrine preached by Christ, as much of his public communication was in this way. It is in the Para-

bles of Christ that we learn the nature of the two dispensations or covenants ; the situation of man by reason of sin ; the character of the Saviour, as the seeker and Saviour of that which was lost ; the power of the gospel, as a sovereign remedy for the moral maladies of man, and its divine efficacy in reconciling and assimilating the sinner to God. It is by the Parables that we learn the unprofitableness of legal righteousness in point of justification to eternal life ; the absolute necessity of becoming new creatures, in order to enter the kingdom of God ; the true character of the Saviour, as the Lord our Righteousness, and his divine power to make all things new.

And I may add to the above consideration many friendly requests from respectable brethren in the ministry, and many of my hearers who have made themselves partially acquainted with my manner of explaining the Parables.

Some will undoubtedly ask why the author was not more particular in quoting scripture evidence for the assistance of the reader. To which I answer: my main design was to have my explanations, or Notes, derive evidence from the subject of discourse, or particular circumstance which seemed to introduce or occasion the Parable. I will mention two particulars for examples. The three Parables in the 15th of St Luke were evidently introduced as an answer to the Pharisees and Scribes who objected to Christ for receiving sinners ; which objection was the evident occasion of the three Parables ; and by attending to that circumstance, the reader will discover the propriety of my Notes.

Again, the Parables of Tares, in the 13th of St Matthew, continues the thread of discourse from the explanation of the Parable of the Sower ; and by connecting these Parables as they ought to be, the reader will find the evidence for the propriety of what I have written on that Parable. Again, many quotations would of necessity have enlarged the work, which would have occasioned an additional expense to the reader.

Again, I do by no means wish to have the Bible read the less, but the more, in consequence of my Notes ; I wish the reader to search the Scriptures, to see if these things are so ; and to satisfy himself, by becoming acquainted with the most valuable of all books. I have, however, on those particular Parables where I saw the greatest danger of error, introduced, as I think sufficient evidence by quotations. The method which I have pursued in most of the Parables would, I acknowledge, be a very bad method in sermonizing, as the hearers in that case would be lost in the multitude of particulars ; yet, in reading, I supposed it an advantage to have the subjects particularly divided. The reason why I have omitted all the Parables in St Mark, and St John, is because of their similarity with those on which I have written, or because I saw no probability of their being misunderstood ; and the same reason I would give for omitting some in St Matthew and in St Luke.

I must tell you further, christian reader, that I am not without some fears respecting your getting a just understanding of the subject before you. Should you, when you have read it through, say it is not altogether according to the ideas which I have heretofore entertained, and dismiss the work without further notice,

I am sure you are likely to understand but little of the matter. It will be necessary to read it a number of times with attention, to search the Scriptures in connexion with the Parables, and to take great care that you do not admit prepossessed ideas as evidence against what you read.

Again, should you hurry through the work, and say it is a good thing, and acknowledge the ideas to be just, without an exception, and pay no more attention to the work, you are equally, as in the other case, liable to know but little of what you read. Suffer me, therefore, earnestly to intreat, that you neither justify nor condemn these Notes until you can do it with a good understanding, and on the authority of the Scriptures.

And may the spirit of HIM, in whom dwells the fulness of wisdom and knowledge, direct you in these serious and solemn inquiries : and that he may make you all wise in his wisdom, holy in his holiness, righteous in his righteousness, and perfect in his perfection, is the fervent desire and joyful hope of a servant of all
mcn

THE AUTHOR.



NOTES
ON
THE PARABLES

PARABLE I.

‘And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.’—Matt. iii, 10.

THESE words were addressed by the forerunner of Christ, to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who came to his baptism; and it is worthy of notice that to them, in particular, he thus spake. We are informed in verses 5, 6, that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan went out to him, and were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins. Now to this vast multitude, this greatest among prophets, said nothing reproachful. They came to him, humble and contrite, confessing their sins; and he stood like a kind shepherd who carefully folds his flocks, received them to his baptism, and encouraged them in their good work of reformation. But when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees, who felt that they had no sins to confess, and were confident that they were entitled to all the ordinances of righteousness, both because they had Abraham to their father, and also that they were

righteous in the sight of God, to whom they could appeal on account of their fasting twice a week, and their paying tithes of all their possessions, he exclaimed, 'O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' This was the same generation of vipers whom Jesus, as we find in Matt. xxiii, 33, thus addressed: 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' As we have no information that John, in his ministry, ever addressed such language to the common people, so we are not informed that Jesus ever held such language in his communications to the multitudes assembled to hear him. But on the scribes and Pharisees, whom he called hypocrites, he denounced the woes of which we read in the New Testament.

'And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees.' Ye Pharisees and Sadducees, ye generation of vipers, great have been your advantages; great have been your pretensions to holiness of life; much have ye despised others; but your fruit is evil; ye are as trees which have received much attention, and have been sufficiently manured and watered, but whose fruit is bad. Long has the owner waited, often has he come to find fruit, and as often has received such fruit only as was offensive. Long has he delayed what I see is now at hand. I see his axe lie at the root.

'Therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.' Unless ye immediately repent and bring forth fruit meet for re-

penitance, ye must be cut down as cumberers of the ground. That this is the sense of the text is evident from the following, Luke xiii. first two paragraphs, particularly the second, which reads thus: 'He spake also this parable: a certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.'

'*The wrath to come,*' of which John spake, when he said, 'who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come,' is described by Jesus in Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24. Speaking of the destruction of the Jews and their city, he said, 'For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles, until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled.'

John adds, verse 11, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the holy ghost, (spirit) and with fire.'

John here acknowledges that the power to execute the judgments which were soon to fall on those whom

he addressed, belonged not to himself, but to him who was to come after him, who was mightier than he.

The emblems used in these Scriptures are remarkably beautiful and instructive. The water used by John, seemed to indicate how easy it was to remove the blots and stains of sin, by repentance. 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.' As uncleanness which slightly adheres to garments may be removed by the use of water, so now, the gentle spirit of mercy seems waiting for you to throw off your guilt by repentance. But if this favorable opportunity be neglected—if this easy method be refused, mightier power than I possess has the axe at the root of the trees. In room of gentle means, those which are as violent as wind and fire, will rush upon you, unrestrained and unquenchable. Wakefield renders this 11th verse somewhat different from the common version. He says, 'he shall baptize you in a holy wind and in a fire;' and it is certainly very evident that means which would be more harsh and severe than those used by John, were intended. When spots and stains are indelible, when they defy the gentle operations of water, a power more subtle and penetrating must be employed. As the most unyielding trees of the forest are prostrated by wind, and as crude metals are tried by fire, so the most hardened sinners, the unyielding impenitent Pharisees and Sadducees must be brought to yield to the severity of those awful judgments, which were then gathering, like dark clouds, over a people whose sins seemed to call aloud for them.

Should the reader question whether it be reasonable to use the word *wind* in place of *ghost*, he is informed that the word in the Greek Testament, ren-

dered *ghost* is πνεματ, which may be rendered spirit, wind, breath, or ghost. See Parkhurst on πνεμα.

These instructive figures used by John, were also used by the ancient prophets. As an example, see Isaiah iv. 4. 'When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.' Again, chap. xxvii, 8, 9. 'He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.'

ILLUSTRATION.

As it is a thing well known that the foregoing parable has generally been applied, by christian commentators, very differently from the application, made in these notes, it is thought expedient to enlarge this edition by candidly considering suitable evidences by which the subject may be the more easily judged of.

The same reason which renders an illustration of this particular subject necessary, requires an illustration also of notes on other parables, which I propose the execution of, in as plain, impartial and scriptural a manner as God, by his grace, may assist me to do.

In my labors on this very important subject, I think it advisable to state the common use which has been made of the text, in as plain and concise a manner as is convenient; seek for the relation between the common explanation and the text with the context; consider suitable arguments to show the impropriety of the common application, and also to show the consistency

of the notes with the text, context and the general tenor of the gospel.

The doctrine of a future and eternal state of *unmerciful* punishment, having obtained almost universal assent in the christian church for many centuries, many of the parables spoken by our Saviour, as well as many other passages of scripture, have been generally used to prove and enforce that sentiment; among which this parable spoken by the forerunner of Christ is found.

I said a future and eternal state of *unmerciful* punishment; for surely that punishment which is never to end, cannot be said to be administered in *mercy*, even by those who think they can see such punishment to be consistent with divine justice.

Agreeably to this doctrine, it has been generally supposed that the true meaning of the above text is, that by *trees* is meant righteous and wicked men, and that every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, signifieth every wicked man who bringeth not forth the fruits of righteousness. Hewing those trees down and casting them into the fire, signifieth the cutting off of the wicked from all their enjoyments, and casting them into the before-mentioned state of future, eternal, *unmerciful* punishment.

Let us now look for the relation between the above explanation, and the text with the context. Why are the trees which bring not forth good fruit, hewn down and cast into the fire? Answer, because they did not bring forth good fruit, but evil fruit. This is the natural sense of the text. What is the evil fruit produced by those trees which are to be cast into the fire? Answer, sin. To this answer none will object. Now look carefully: Will the cutting off of the wicked

from all possible comforts, and consigning them to future, eternal, unmerciful punishment, cause them to cease from bringing forth evil fruit, and to bring forth good fruit? Answer, no; for that punishment which weans the creature from sin, and inclines him to righteousness, is by no means unmerciful, nor can it be endless. And surely it does not require a very critical investigation to show the impropriety of hewing down and burning trees, because they bring forth evil fruit, if this hewing them down and burning them, will in no degree prevent their bringing forth this evil fruit.

PARABLE II.

'Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'—Matt. iii, 12.

As these words are a continuation of what we have before noticed of John's address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and are the conclusion thereof, they ought not to have been separated as a distinct parable. However, as they were thus disposed in former editions of the notes, they are so placed in this.

It may be well to bring into one view the several emblems which are found in this address, all which seem to be used to set forth the severe trials and judgments which were soon to come on the Jews. First the cutting down of trees which bring not forth good fruit, and the casting of them into a fire. Second, the baptizing of the people, not in the mild element of water, but in wind and fire. Third, the fanning of wheat, by which the chaff is separated from the

grain, that the wheat may be gathered into the garner. Fourth, the burning up of chaff with unquenchable fire.

All these emblems were unquestionably designed to represent those political and religious commotions, those terrible judgments and trials which finally overthrew the Jewish nation, destroyed their city and temple, and dispersed them among all nations; also, that spirit of light and divine wisdom, by which all that seemed confusion, was efficiently directed so as to result in the establishment of the gospel in the world, and the building up of the religion of Jesus among men. The subversion of the Jewish polity, the overthrow and dispersion of the nation, constituted no greater change in the political system, than did the doctrine and religion of Christianity in the ecclesiastical. False doctrines and spurious traditions, were separated from divine truth, as the fan separates the chaff from the wheat, and they were consumed as chaff is consumed in the fire.

This work was suggested by the Saviour, as we read Matt. xv, concerning a controversy between him and the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem. His disciples informed him that he had offended his opposers; to which he replied verse 13, 'Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up!'

By the use of emblems similar to those we have noticed, the prophet Malachi represented the same great and astonishing events. See chapter iii, first three verses: 'Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But

who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' Again chapter iv, first three verses: 'For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.'

ILLUSTRATION.

The common use which has been made of this parable, is the same which has been made of the former, and it is evident that they were both spoken on one subject, and that their meaning is similar.

But that they give no support to the doctrine of an hereafter eternal state of misery, will quickly be discovered, if we are candid enough to begin our investigation by asking whether there be any proof that the author of these passages had reference to a future state? This question being before us, let us be careful that it be correctly answered, before we allow ourselves to draw conclusions which we may find it difficult to justify.

Nothing seems more evident than that John was speaking of a dispensation of wrath and tribulation

which was soon to fall on those whom he addressed. He was not speaking of the ordinary course of divine providence with man. But according to the use which has been made, by christian divines, of these parables, John meant nothing by the *wrath to come* only such wrath as always had been executed on the wicked, as fast as they left this mortal state. Furthermore, when he said, 'And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees,' what he meant, was, that the axe had always laid thus at the life of man, to cut him down by death, since the first transgression. Also, when he said, 'Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor; and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,' he meant that the one who was to come after him, who was mightier than himself, was soon going to do what he had always been doing; that is, cutting the brittle thread of life and sending good men to heaven, and wicked men to hell. To reconcile the language which the forerunner of Jesus used in these parables, with the use which has been made of them, seems impossible.

If we examine the strong figure used in the parable of burning up chaff with unquenchable fire, we shall at once see that it could have no allusion to an eternal duration of punishment. That which is burned up does not continue. What could more unfitly represent immortal beings enduring endless burnings, than the burning up of chaff?

These parables seem to represent the nation of the Jews by an orchard, into which the owner is about to enter, for the purpose of removing all the trees which are but an incumbrance to the ground. Also, by a threshing floor, which a husbandman is about to purge with his fan. The time was then at hand, when John

addressed this language to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the history, both sacred and profane, of that people in those times, fully justifies its use. When Jesus addressed this same class whom John addressed in these parables, as recorded Matt. xxiii, he was careful to inform them, that the woes of which he spake, would certainly come upon that generation. See verse 33, &c. 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (*γυμνασιον*.) Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.' Nothing is more evident than that Jesus here spake, not of things of eternity, but of things of time, not of things of another world, but of things appertaining to the present. With this fact his lament for Jerusalem evidently agrees: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION.

Agreeably with the above notes, we may consider, 1. The important character of the true ministers of the gospel.

2. Their liability to lose that influence among men which renders them profitable in the ministry.

3. The disrespect with which a ministry is justly treated, which is destitute of the savor of the word of salvation.

1. As it is the nature of salt to save, preserve, and season, so is the true and faithful ministry of the gospel efficacious to save men from sin, to preserve them in uncorruptible purity, and to bring them into that proper temperament of mind by which they are acceptable sacrifices unto God through Jesus Christ.

The use of salt is seen, in the directions given concerning sacrifices in Lev. ii, 13. 'And every oblation of thy meat-offering thou shalt season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' This salt is the divine power of the covenant of God to save from sin, and reconcile the sinner to God, as may be seen by Rom. xv, 16, 'that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost is therefore the salt of the everlasting covenant ordered, and in all things sure.

✓ 2. A departure from the simplicity of the gospel of God, disallowing the power of the salt of the covenant to sanctify and season the sacrifice, setting up creeds,

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~~modes and forms~~ as necessary ^{to} salvation, leading ~~proselytes to depend on a righteousness~~ of their own for acceptance with God, is undoubtedly meant by the ~~ministers of the word losing their savor, and becoming good for nothing.~~ Such has been the melancholy falling away of the christian ministry, and such, for a long time, has been the unprofitableness of their labors. There is no room for misjudging in this case; for the multitudes who have been proselyted by them, have discovered as much unholiness as the old Gentiles did before the gospel was preached by the apostles. This is witnessed by the cruel persecutions at the head of which has ever been found a carnal ministry, imposing ~~creeds and carnal ordinances~~ on men, of their own invention. And the great want of charity, and brotherly kindness among the different orders of the clergy of this country, too plainly shows their want of that salt of the ~~covenant~~ of God, while the ill will and injurious bigotry of professors in general, too plainly discover that they imitate their leaders.

These observations are not designed to represent that there are no instances, even in all denominations, of faithful evangelical ministers of the word; but it is very evident that this class is by far the minority.

In departing from the power of the gospel covenant, the christian clergy have acted the part which the prophet Ezekiel accuses the shepherds of Israel of acting. See xxxiv, 4. 'The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.' With unreasonable, unscriptural, and cruel doctrines and ecclesiastical disciplines, have the sheep of Christ been

driven from the fold, and scattered on barren mountains. Therefore, 'thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.' No doubt the Jewish doctors supposed that by compassing sea and land to make a proselyte to their *traditions*, by which they made void the law, they obtained a sacrifice well pleasing to God, though they judged and condemned their neighbors without mercy. But they little thought while they were doing this, they were the children of hell, and that their proselyte would be still more so.

On their feast days, they could rejoice and offer offerings to God in gratitude for their successes; but oh the reproof! See Amos v, 21, 22, 23. 'I hate, I despise your feast days, and will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.' How much like those Jewish doctors, christian doctors are doing and have done, and how similar to the rejection of those, the rejection of these has been and will be, is not very difficult to see. Societies are now formed, at the expense of which sea and land is compassed to proselytize men to those sentiments and customs which have kept the christian church in a perpetual strife and debate, persecution and blood, ever since they were invented.

But 3. God will recompense this folly on those who practise it, for they now appear like salt which has

lost its savor, which is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. The Lord will surely deliver his people from such shepherds, and make them who have dishonored him to be lightly esteemed.

PARABLE IV.

‘Ye are the light of the world.’ A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Matt. v. 14, 15.

It must first be remembered that Christ himself is the *true light* which lighteth every man who cometh into the world; see St. John i, 9; but when Christ had communicated the light of himself to his disciples, they, acting in that light, and walking by it, would be to others as Christ had been to them, see St. John xvii, 8: ‘For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them.’ Verse 18: ‘As thou hast sent me into the world, *even so* have I also sent *them into the world.*’ The apostles were appointed to *manifest* the gospel to all nations; and whatsoever maketh manifest is light; therefore, Christ declared his disciples to be the light of the world. ‘A city set on an hill cannot be hid.’ The order, regularity and harmony, which ought to be observed among the disciples of Christ, are signified by a city. And that they ought carefully to exhibit all the virtues and graces of the gospel as conspicuously as possible, is meant by a city being set on an hill so that it could not be hid. ‘Neither do men light a candle

and put it under a bushel ; but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.' The disciples being lighted by that *true light* which will finally light every man that cometh into the world, is meant by candles' being lighted, and that Christ had lighted them for the purpose of their giving light to others, and that they ought not to secrete that light from the world, is signified by a candle when lighted being placed on a candlestick to give light to all.

Let all professors of christianity, and especially those who are called to the glorious work of the ministry, remember well the application of the parable: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they beholding your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

ILLUSTRATION.

- 1 We may notice Christ as the true light.
2. The ministers of his word partaking of and reflecting his light to the world ; and
3. The impropriety of hiding or keeping this light in obscurity.

As the natural sun is the light, glory and beauty of the natural world, so Christ is the light, glory and beauty of the moral world. He is called the sun of righteousness, in Mal. iv, 2: 'But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' When Simeon of Jerusalem, who waited for the consolation of Israel, to whom it was revealed, by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ, was blessed with that vision, and held the child in his arms, he blessed God, saying, 'Lord, now lettest thou

thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a *light* to *lighten* the *Gentiles*, and the *glory* of thy *people Israel*.' St John calls Christ ' the *true light*, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world.' Jesus calls himself *the light*, in John xii, 35, 36. ' Then Jesus said unto them, yet a little while is the *light* with you ; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you ; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have *light* believe in the *light* that ye may be the children of *light*.' Chap. viii. verse 12, he calls himself the *light*, of the *world*. ' Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, *I am the light of the world* ; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light* of life.' Christ is called the *light* of the gospel covenant, or new Jerusalem, which St Paul calls Jerusalem that is above. See Isaiah lx. 1. ' Arise, shine ; for *thy light* is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Rev. xxi. 22, 23. ' And I saw no temple therein ; for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of God did *lighten* it, and the *Lamb* is the *light* thereof.'

Perhaps there is no representation given of Christ, which more evidently discovers his power to save mankind, than in those scriptures which speak of him in the character of *light*. Man is represented as alienated from God through *ignorance*. This being the case, the knowledge of the truth would reconcile him to God. The object of Christ's mission is to reconcile all things to his Father. Whatsoever maketh manifest

is *light*.' When Christ shall have manifested the true character of the Father to mankind, universal reconciliation will be the consequence. Jesus says, 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free; by which we see that it was necessary for them only to know the truth, in order to obtain their freedom; which shows their bondage was the effect of their ignorance. Jesus is called the faithful and the true witness. The use of a witness is to make known the truth and certainty of a fact, not to be the author of the fact to which he witnesses. Christ is a witness to mankind of the Father's love, as has been observed, in a quotation from Rom. v, 8: 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Christ is not the *cause* of God's loving mankind, but the *evidence* to us that God is love towards us. The mercy, and grace according to which we are saved and called, 'was *given* unto us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but was made manifest by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to *light* through the gospel.' The action of light in the natural world is not to *create objects* for us to see, but to *manifest* those objects of which we are ignorant, or which are hidden from us by reason of darkness. The things of the kingdom of God were *hidden* from the wise and prudent, as Jesus says in Matt. xi, 25. And the power to *reveal* the Father to mankind he acknowledges to be in himself, in the 27th verse: 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will *reveal* him.'

The *things* which were *hidden* from the wise and

prudent, did as actually exist as if they had been made known to them ; if this were not the case, they could not have been *revealed* unto *babes*. In a word, all the glorious truths of the everlasting gospel have had their existence in God, in all past eternity, and the whole system of the ministry of the gospel is designed to bring those things to light, to reveal them to mankind, by which the reconciliation of the unreconciled, blind and ignorant children of our everlasting Father in heaven, may and will be effected.

2. We may notice the ministers of the word of Christ as partaking of and reflecting his light to the world. This is the character in which our text views them.

As is observed in the notes, Christ gave to his disciples the *words* which the Father gave unto him, and sent them into the world as the Father sent him into the world. The Father sent Christ into the world to be the *light* of the world ; Christ sent his apostles into the world to be a light also to the world, by communicating the same words to the world, at large, that the Father had communicated to him, and he to them. In communicating these *words*, the minister of Christ is a *light* to the people ; but if he change these *words*, add to them, or diminish them, he becomes darkness. When, on account of Christ's speaking the *words* of *life*, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him, Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ? 'Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the *words* of *eternal life*.' In the context, Jesus informs his disciples that the *words* which he spake to them were *spirit* and *life* ; see St. John vi, 63, &c. Here we have a very plain account of the *words* which the Father gave to

Christ, and which Christ also gave to his apostles to preach to the world of mankind. They are the *words of eternal life*; they are *spirit*. In preaching the *words of eternal life*, the true minister of Jesus Christ is a *light* to the world. In preaching the *words of spirit and life*, the true minister of Christ is a light to mankind.

- It may be well to notice contrary *words*, in order to see the contrast. The opposite of *eternal life* is *eternal death*. The opposite of *spirit and life* is *flesh and death*. The words of *eternal death* we have heard from the lips of a ministry which, having lost the *salt* of the covenant of God, possesses no longer the savor of the word, and therefore has changed the *words of eternal life*, for words more consistent with the darkness and alienation of their minds.

As has been observed, the action of light is to make manifest things which do exist, and the duty of a witness is to testify of things which are. Thus the character of light, and the character of a witness is the same. It has been observed, that Christ was not the cause of God's love to us, but the witness to manifest, or commend that love to us; and it may be proper to notice likewise, as has been observed, that the mercy and grace, according to which we are called, was *given* unto us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but was made *manifest* by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath abolished death and brought *life and immortality to light* through the gospel. As it is evident that the work of the Saviour was to make known to the world of mankind, the good things which were proposed in the eternal counsel of God's good pleasure, we ought not to suppose that those good things were granted us as *favours pur-*

chased by Christ of the Father. Nor is it the work of the true gospel ministry to initiate mankind into any scheme by which they may secure to themselves the love, favor or mercy of God; or whereby they may obtain an heirship with the sons of God. But the labor of the true ministers is to *bear witness* of those things which their eyes have seen, their ears have heard, and their hands have handled of the *word of life*. When the preacher forgets Christ, and preaches, exhorts and warns the people to *secure an interest* in *Christ*, and sets forth the awful consequences of neglect, he is very far from being a faithful and true witness. 'For the *spirit* itself, beareth *witness* with our spirits that we are the children of God; and if *children*, then *heirs*, *heirs* of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.'

When the devout Ananias was sent to Saul when blind at Damascus, he stood by him and said, 'The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his *witness* unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.' And this testimony agrees with the words spoken by the Lord himself to Saul when he met him in the way, 'I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.'

In bearing the testimony of Jesus to the world of mankind, Paul had nothing to do but to bear witness of the things which he had seen, and those in which his divine master would appear unto him.

The Saviour of sinners never instructed Saul the persecutor, how to obtain an interest in his love; but he

revealed the love of the Father in his soul, by his quickening spirit, and sent him to bear witness to sinners of the love and mercy of God towards them. Thus he testifies, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acception, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

The true ministry in which the apostles were the light of the world, may be learned from the account which St Paul gave to the Corinthians in the following words: 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' In the true ministry of the gospel in which the servants of Christ are the *light* of the world, there is no imputation of sin to the world. It holds up to view the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; it is a testimony of him, who says, 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world;' it 'knows nothing save Christ and him crucified.'

3. The necessity of this light's shining clearly, and the impropriety of its being obscured, are considerations which ever ought to lie with weight on the minds of those who are called by the grace of God, to bear witness to the truth as it is in Jesus.

1. The infinite importance of the things to be made manifest by this light, and to be testified of by the faithful witnesses, is of consequence in a due consideration of this subject. These things are divine realities: they comprehend the love of an infinitely wise and merciful God, his divine purpose which he purposed in himself concerning the final reconciliation of all things to himself, and the means by which he

2. The darkness, ignorance and consequent alienation of mankind from God, calls aloud for the light to be placed in a conspicuous place, that all may see. The misery of mankind in consequence of not knowing the truth, calls aloud for the true witness to be faithful in his testimony.

Mankind, deceived, led by carnal mindedness, and alienated from God, are represented as being in the prison-house. from which they are to be delivered by the testimony of the faithful and true witness, as expressed by the prophet, 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a *light* of the Gentiles; to *open* the *blind* eyes, to *bring out* the *prisoners* from the *prison*, and them that sit in *darkness* out of the *prison-house*.' And in this is exemplified the truth of that scripture which saith, 'A true witness delivereth souls.'

Though we have great reason to rejoice, that there are any who are willing, by the help of divine grace, to bear that true testimony by which souls are delivered, yet we have reason to regret that the number is much greater who give a contrary testimony, which is too successful in blinding the minds of those who are already too much in the dark. And many there are, it is to be feared, who have the words of eternal life put into their mouths, yet are fond of making a poor excuse to palliate their neglect in not letting their light shine before men.

May he who walketh among the golden candlesticks, make his angels spirits, and his ministers flames of fire.

PARABLE V.

‘ And if thy right eye offend thee (or cause thee to offend,) pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee (or cause thee to offend) cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.’—Matt. v. 29, 30.

It is evident that Christ spake these words by way of parable; for, literally speaking, the loss of an eye or an hand would make no difference with a man in a moral or a religious sense.

Some have understood that by a right eye, or a right hand, was meant those particular sins to which men were most prone, or violently attached. Others suppose that particular friends and connexions in life, who, being unfriendly to the religion of Christ, might lead us astray, or cause us to offend against the glorious cause of the Redeemer, were to be understood by the right eye or the right hand; and as there is nothing in either explanation which can immediately tend to any gross corruption, I need not be very particular on this part of the subject; though perhaps the latter explanation would better comport with the like passage in St. Mark, where the person is represented as *maimed* in consequence of parting with a hand. As parting with our *friends* causes the sense of *maimedness* more than the parting with our sins, perhaps we should do well to decide in favor of the latter explanation.

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We pass to take notice of the *hell* mentioned in the text. The word *hell* is, undoubtedly, variously used in Scripture, but always means misery and trouble when used in a moral sense; in which sense it is evidently used in the above passage. David, in Psalm xviii, 5, says, The *sorrows of hell* compassed me about. Psalm lxxxvi, 13: 'Thou hast *delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*' If we consider David here speaking of himself, it brings to mind that awful iniquity of which he was guilty, and the crime for which he condemned himself before Nathan the prophet. And who can describe the anguish of a soul lying under the guilt of a crime of as crimson a die as any recorded in Scripture? No wonder David spake so highly of the goodness of the Lord in granting him a gracious remission of his sins, and a release from the bondage of iniquity and *hell* of guilt.

But before we dismiss this Parable, we will take particular notice of its corresponding passage in St. Mark; more particularly of that fire of which it is said, it shall never go out. This fire is the same, no doubt as described in Notes on former Parables: perhaps the same fire is alluded to in Deuteronomy xxxii, 22: 'For a *fire* is kindled in mine *anger*, and shall *burn* unto the *lowest hell,*' &c. Here observe, this fire was to *burn* unto the *lowest hell*, which teaches us that sublime truth of the agency of the Divine Spirit in reproofing the world of sin, and cleansing it from all iniquity by the blood of the cross. And that we are right respecting this fire, the conclusion will fully evince. Observe Mark ix, 49: 'For every one shall be salted with *fire*, and every *sacrifice* shall be salted with *salt.*' Remember that we are exhorted to offer our bodies a living sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable service; but

this cannot be done until we are *salted* with *fire*. Again, in verse 50, Christ says, 'Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it?' that is, the sacrifice. But we are not to suppose that this divine fire can change in itself, but that it may be *quenched* in us; and, therefore, we are exhorted not to *quench* the *Spirit*. And Christ closes, by exhorting his disciples to have *salt* in themselves, (which *salt* is that *fire* which can *never* be *quenched*.) and to have peace one with another. Here, undoubtedly, we see the end of the holy fire on the altar of sacrifice used in the priesthood of the law.

ILLUSTRATION.

Because it is said in Mark ix, that the fire, into which the subject should be cast, 'never shall be quenched,' the passage has generally been applied to the support of the doctrine of future, eternal unmerciful punishment. And indeed, all similar passages must be applied to that use, or that doctrine must lose the credit which has, for a long time, perhaps too implicitly, been given to it.

To show that such doctrine has no natural connexion with the text and context, we may notice the following particulars:

1. Those to whom the words of the Parable were spoken.

2. The character of the speaker, as he stood in relation to those to whom he spake; and

3. The nature and manifest design of the fire which is never to be quenched.

1. According to the connexion of the text, where it is found in Matthew v, Jesus spake these words to those

whom he calls in the 13th verse 'the *salt* of the earth,' and in the 14th 'the *light* of the world.' According to the connexion in Mark ix, these words were spoken by Christ to his disciples, as may be seen by reading from the 31st verse to the end of the chapter.

2. The character in which Jesus stood, in relation to his disciples may be learned by the following scriptures: St. John xv, 12, &c. 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' See also chap. xiii, 34: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' From these scriptures we learn that Jesus acknowledged himself to be a friend to his disciples, who loved them, and was ready to lay down his life for them. The strength of his love to his disciples is also expressed in John xv, 9: 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.'

3. The nature and manifest design of the fire which is never to be quenched, we learn, as has been observed in the Notes, by observing that Jesus says, in Mark ix, 49, 'For every one shall be *salted* with *fire*, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' This *salt*, which is the *fire* which never shall be quenched, is the same, no doubt, represented, as has been noticed, by the *salt* of the covenant under the law, according to the directions given in Lev. ii, 13. The manifest design of this *fire* is to save, by its purifying qualities,

the subject on which it operates. Now if can find any natural connexion between the three particulars, here brought to view, and the future, eternal, unmerciful punishment of those disciples and acknowledged friends of Jesus Christ, then the common opinion of this scripture stands on the evidence of the text. But the erroneousness of such an opinion is so palpable, that it requires no argument to make it more so.

The objector, possessing an unaccountable attachment to the opinion generally entertained of the text, will say,—Although these words were spoken to the disciples of Christ, they ought to be applied to men in general. To this I agree, but not to the exclusion of the disciples. There surely would be no propriety in saying, that, though Christ spake the words of our Parable to his disciples, he did not mean that they should take either the direction or the warning to themselves. In the connexion of the text in Matthew v, Christ says to his disciples, ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ It surely would not be correct to say that Christ did not mean that his *disciples* should not enter into the kingdom of heaven except their righteousness should exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. The Truth is plain enough. The disciples of Christ, as well as every body else, must have a better righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees, in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven; and the disciples, as well as every body else, were exposed to be cast into that refining fire, which never shall be quenched. Therefore, if any of the human race ever were exposed to endless, unmerciful punishment, as proved, or intended by our Parable, the disciples most surely

were thus exposed. - It is then reasonable for us to inquire, *what friendship* that must be which would exercise itself in inflicting endless, unmerciful punishment? If this be friendship, what is enmity? If it be argued that the subject deserves this unmerciful punishment, and that it is inflicted by justice, though directly contrary to the benevolent principle of friendship, it is acknowledging that the friendship of Christ is directly opposed to justice. According to the Scriptures, Christ was so great a friend to all mankind as to lay down his life for them, and he is said to be the same yesterday, to day and forever. How then can he become unmerciful to those very sinners whom he loves, and for whom he died? The propriety of Notes on this Parable, and their relation to the whole connexion, is easy to be seen; for any punishment which is calculated to purge and cleanse mankind from sin, is perfectly consistent with the love and friendship which our Saviour has manifested for mankind. David was afflicted with the pains and sorrows of hell, and acknowledged that it was good for him that he was afflicted. The goodness of God to mankind is no less evident in the chastisements with which he corrects his children, than in the smiles of his providence; for the Lord will not cast off forever, but though he cause grief, yet will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.'

NOTES ON THE PARABLES.

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PARABLE VI.

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Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and ~~and elsewhere~~ which go in the street: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it.—Matt. vii, 13, 14.

By the strait gate, we understand the way of life communicated under the law, the word strait having the signification of difficult; the word narrow is also used in describing the gate, or way of life.* The way of life, under the law, in respect to dispensation, was through those shadowy types made use of under that dispensation, or in the priesthood of the law; and the way was so narrow or difficult, that few, very few were enabled to look through the figures of the law, and behold Christ: or if possible to make the idea more plain, we say, Christ is the only way of life, as he says of himself, I am the way, &c. And although it may seem disagreeable to a Christian who has been taught the unbounded grace of the Saviour, and viewed him as a place of broad rivers, to tell him that this same Jesus was narrow, life difficult to be obtained by him, &c., yet, when we consider that the Christian of the present day enjoys those things which many prophets long desired but obtained not, and that those who had the

*That Jesus had reference to the two dispensations to the close of the Old, and the introduction of the New, where he spake this parable, is rendered highly probable by the connexion in which it stands in Luke xiii, which the reader may consult at leisure. But as the parable is introduced in Matt. vii, the strait gate is, to do all things to others, whatsoever we would that men should do unto us. This is the law and the prophets; this is christianity. A contrary conduct is the broad road in which the many go on to destruction.

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brightest ideas of the Saviour, under the law, saw him in respect to the present dispensation, through a glass, and that as darkly as those who now believe, view him, in his glory, which is to be revealed in the ages to come, it will not seem unjust to represent the Saviour, under the law, as a *strait difficult* and *narrow* way.

On the other hand, it is just to represent the way of death, which leadeth to destruction, broad, in the same proportion as the way of *life* is narrow ; observing at the same time, that the representations are under the same dispensation. But what is meant in the text by the way and gate, which leadeth to destruction : Answ. Christ the heavenly man is the way of life, it is evident that the earthly man is the way to destruction ; and though the Jews, generally speaking, looked for salvation by the works of the carnal or old man, and though that way seemed right to them, the end thereof was death to the *many* who sought salvation in that way. And though many in the present day may be as uncircumcised in heart and ears as the unbelieving Jews, and may boast of their hard earned righteousness, and despise others for the lack thereof, and all these things seem right to them ; and though they may fancy themselves alive without the law, yet when the commandments shall come with divine authority on their minds, the end of all their righteousness will be *death*. Happy is the soul that can boast the loss of all these things, and glory alone in the righteousness of the great Redeemer.

ILLUSTRATION.

The common use of the above passage has been to prove that the number, which will finally obtain salva-

tion by Jesus Christ, will be few ; and that the number which will suffer endless, unmerciful punishment will be many.

The number set forth in the Scriptures as the happy subjects of gospel salvation, may be judged of from the promises made to the fathers, in which it is said that all the families, all the nations, and all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed in Christ the seed of Abraham. The only method by which the opposer of universal salvation by Christ, pretends to get along with the promises of God, as stated above, is, by saying the *blessing* promised, means the temporal blessings of providence, of which all men partake in this life. And though this be the only way to avoid the real gospel truth, yet it acknowledges one main point, by which the partial doctrine is destroyed. For it allows that the promises are strictly to all men without distinction. This being the case, the whole is lost on the part of the opposer, by the particular testimony of St Paul to the Galatians, in which he decides the matter beyond all dispute. See Gal. iii, 8: 'And the Scriptures foreseeing that God would *justify* the *heathen* through *faith* preached before the *gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.' By this Scripture we see that the promise is a *gospel* promise, and that the *blessing* is *justification* through *faith*. If all the nations, all the families and all the kindreds of the earth are finally blessed with justification through faith, in Christ the seed of Abraham, the opinion that but few of the human race will be saved by Christ, cannot possibly be true. It is remarkable that a doctrine directly contrary to the most plain and positive declarations of Scripture, should ever have gained such general consent, and become incorporated as an essen-

tial article in the Christian faith. So extraordinary do I view this particular, that I consider it one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. Though it may be thought a digression from our subject, I am disposed to notice, in this place, two important evidences of the truth and authenticity of divine revelation, one of which seems to have been designed for the conviction of the Gentiles, of the divinity of the prophecies of old testament, and the other for the conviction of the Jews of the divinity of the new.

1. The first is the very remarkable fulfilment of the prophecies of the old testament, relating to the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, by the Jews. The Jews were traditionally educated to believe in a Messiah; their prophets frequently spake of him, and some of them pointed out the treatment which he would meet with from that very people who anxiously expected him. Such prophecies, to the common judgment of mankind, must appear not a little improbable; and it is very evident that the rulers among the Jews were ignorant of the meaning of those prophecies notwithstanding they professed to believe in them. The Gentiles might, with seeming plausibility, discredit the prophecies of a Messiah, they being so improbable. For who would expect to see those Jews, who were anxiously expecting their Messiah, fulfil that part of the prophecies which related to their rejecting him, and even putting him to death? But all these things were actually done by the rulers, doctors, scribes and most religious people of the Jews. Here then the unexpected event took place, and the most improbable part of the prophecies was accomplished in a most signal manner. Of this circumstance the apostle of the Gentiles did not fail to make the best possible use in

that memorable sermon which he delivered at Antioch, in a synagogue of the Jews, a part of which is recorded in Acts xiii. Paul, addressing the Jews, gives them a general sketch of God's dealings with their nation and of his fulfilling his promise in raising up Jesus, of the seed of David; and coming in order to Christ, says, 'Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.' The Gentiles, on this occasion, were struck with conviction in their minds, of the truth of those prophecies which the Jews had so remarkably fulfilled, and desired to hear the word on the next sabbath. The report of Paul's preaching was generally spread through the city, and almost the whole city assembled to hear. At this the envy of the Jews was moved, and they spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and his companion boldly gave up the Jews in open assembly, to the blindness of their eyes and to the hardness of their hearts, and turned to the Gentiles with these words: 'For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,

I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.' At this the Gentiles believed, and glorified the word of the Lord.

The Gentiles, in this case, have as good a proof of the truth of the prophecies as the nature of the case could admit ; and it was sufficient, by the blessing of God, to open their eyes to the light of divine revelation, and to the scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ. The reader will remember that they were first called *Christians* at Antioch.

How wonderful are the ways of God ! He was pleased to hide the things of the gospel from the wise and prudent among his covenant people, that their blindness and hardness of heart might be a means of converting the Gentiles, as that blindness and hardness of heart was necessary unto the fulfilment of the prophecies.

2. The prophecies of the new testament are as remarkable as those of the old. They appear to the common reason of mankind to wear the appearance of improbability. They speak of a falling away from the true doctrine and worship of Christ, and of the embracing of the doctrines of devils, and the worshipping of a beast. And these things are as plainly pointed out in the new testament as the crucifixion of Christ is in the old. The fulfilment of these new testament prophecies, by professing Christians, is as remarkable, and as convincing of the divinity of these prophecies, as the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, by those who professed to understand and believe them, was of their divinity. And it seems to be evident from the Scriptures, that God will make as glorious a use of the apostacy of the Christian church, as he did of the

apostacy of the Jewish church. The apostacy of the Jews was a means of converting the Gentiles, and the apostacy of the Christian church, and their recovery from their apostacy, will completely fulfil all the prophecies of the new testament, so far as is necessary to convince the Jews of the divinity of the new testament.

Thus we see that God communicated mercy to the Gentiles through the blindness and unbelief of the Jews ; and also, we have reason to hope that through the fall and recovery of the Christian church, mercy will be communicated to the Jews ; so that finally of the twain, our blessed Lord will make one new man in everlasting and eternal peace.

What I have endeavored to suggest to the reader's understanding, in this digression was very clearly labored and shown to the church at Rome by St Paul in his epistle to that church, see chap. xi, 30, 31, 32 : 'For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their *unbelief*, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them in all unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' The same thing is expressed in a number of ways in this chapter. Consistently with the foregoing, I see, to my satisfaction, why the doctrine of future, eternal, unmerciful punishment has been generally credited in the Christian church. The apostacy would not have been complete without it. This doctrine is exactly the reverse of the gospel of salvation ; and the character of a devouring beast, is exactly the reverse of the character of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

I may now proceed further to show that the notion,

that the number, who will finally obtain salvation by Christ, will be *few*, is directly contrary to the testimony of Scripture. See Isaiah liii, 11 : ‘ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant *justify many* ; for he shall bear their iniquities.’ If the *few* mentioned in St Matthew be all who finally obtain salvation by Christ, what will become of the *many* spoken of in Isaiah, who are justified by him who bore their iniquities ? See Rev. vii, 9, 10 : ‘ After this I beheld, and, lo, a *great multitude*, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.’ If the few mentioned in St Matthew be all who ever obtain salvation by Christ, what will become of the *great multitude*, which no man can number, of all nations, and all kindreds, and all people, and all tongues, who are permitted to stand before the throne and before the Lamb, and to be clothed with *white robes*, and palms, the ensign of victory, in their hands ; who cry with a loud voice, saying, ‘ Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb ?’ Should it please my heavenly Father, to grant one so unworthy as myself, the humblest station in that innumerable company, I hope I should not be disposed to envy any situation to which others might aspire.

The language of the above text is perfectly adapted to show, that the promise made to the fathers, will finally be accomplished in its most extensive and glorious sense.

Should any suppose that it is inconsistent with truth

to hope for the salvation of any who enter in at the wide gate which leadeth to destruction, let them remember the testimony of the Lord by the prophet Hosea. See chap. xiii, 9: 'O Israel thou hast *destroyed* thyself; but in me is thine help.'

PARABLE VII.

~~'Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. —Matt. vii, 24.'~~

THE words of Christ, to which he here undoubtedly refers, immediately precede those which I have written, in which he observes, that many might say unto him, Lord, Lord, who should not be admitted into the kingdom of heaven; but they alone should be admitted who did the will of his Father who is in heaven. But just before, he was speaking of the good and bad trees and of their respective fruits, arguing the impossibility of a good tree bringing forth evil fruit, or a corrupt tree bringing forth good fruit; and further he says, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire; the meaning of which I have elsewhere given. But we may here learn, that those who partake of the *corrupt tree* alone, and are still laboring to establish a righteousness of their own, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, may profess Christianity, and say to Christ, Lord, Lord, &c., but those alone who *do* the will of the Father, can enter into the kingdom of heaven: therefore, those who heard the sayings of Christ and did them, were likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. By

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house, I understand the *hope* or confidence in which the mind rests. By *rock*, I understand Christ; which application is too evident to need proof. And what can compare with that wisdom which teaches us to put our trust in Christ, and build all our hopes of salvation on that rock of ages, that chief corner stone which foolish builders refuse? He, and he only is truly wise who doth this; all other wisdom is from the earth, from beneath, &c. But the wisdom of which I speak, to what shall I compare it? 'It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire. The gold and crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.' Job xxviii, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

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And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them (not) shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.' Verse 26.

As was said in the other instance, the house is the hope or confidence in which the mind rests. By the sand, I understand that righteousness of which I spake in the description of the corrupt tree. And what can equal the folly of man, who is vile, placing his hopes of salvation in works of his own!

In verses 25, 27, it is said, *The rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon these houses, and that which was built upon a rock fell not, because it was founded upon a rock; but that which was built upon the sand, fell, and great was the fall of it.*

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I shall refer the reader to Isaiah xxvii, beginning at the 16th, to the close of the 22d inclusive. Here observe, a stone is laid in Zion for a foundation; this is the rock or stone spoken of in our text; and it is said to be a tried stone, a precious corner stone, and a sure foundation; and that he who believeth should not make haste. Then there is an account given, of judgment being laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. This line and plummet were used in laying this foundation in Zion, and this chief corner stone was raised by them. Something of the same was communicated to Amos; see Amos vii, 7: 'Thus he showed me, and behold the Lord stood upon a wall made by a *plumb-line*, with a plumb-line in his hand;' which plumb-line the Lord told Amos he would set in the midst of his people Israel, and that he would pass by no more. Christ is here meant by a chief corner stone, the spirit of the law, by a plumb-line, and the whole house of Israel brought to perfect rectitude, is represented by a wall built by a plumb-line; and this is the house which will endure when the storms shall come which is described in Isaiah xxviii, 17, &c. 'And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of *lies*, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.' The refuge of *lies* is the same as the *house* built on the sand. Here we are taught, that nothing but that which is raised by plumb and line can endure when the overflowing scourge shall come; nothing can abide but the gold, the silver, and the precious stones built on the sure foundation. In verse 20, self-righteousness is described thus, 'For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.' And in verse 22, it is said that there is 'a consumption determined upon the whole earth.'

Israel

When the whole earthly nature, with all its increase, shall be destroyed, then shall the *hope* of the *hypocrite perish*, the house of the self-righteous shall fall, and great shall be the fall thereof. Let the question be asked, among the various denominations who profess Christianity, and call Jesus *Lord*, how many rare ones can be found who hear the words of Christ and do them? Who have obtained that wisdom whereby they are taught to depend on nothing but Christ and him crucified? We ought to make but one denomination of real Christians; all who hear the words of Christ and do them, are of that class; and all those, who, trusting in themselves, vainly believe that they are rich and increased in goods, must find their gain to be their loss. And may God grant that at the last they may find their *loss* to be their *gain*.

ILLUSTRATION.

The common opinion of the falling of the house which is built upon the sand, is, that it signifies the failing of a false hope, and the greatness of the fall is significant of the endless despair of the builder. Against this opinion, I shall endeavor to introduce some queries, by way of investigation. I believe it will be agreed by all, that the falling of the house built on the sand, is the same as the destruction of the hope of the wicked, which is as the giving up of the ghost. What I wish to direct the reader's attention to, is the question, whether the failing of a false hope necessarily implies that the disappointed can never receive, from another quarter, that for which he hoped on false grounds, or even blessings infinitely better.

Let us take St Paul for an instance. His hopes of salvation, before he was converted, were all built upon the sandy foundation of legal righteousness. Did this hope abide? No, surely it did not. It was utterly demolished, and became of no value even in his own judgment. But did he not obtain, from another quarter, that which was infinitely more valuable than he had before conceived of? See his own answer to this query: Phil. iii, 4,&c. 'Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' In the account, which the experienced apostle gives us, we learn that it was necessary for him to suffer the loss of his legal hope in order to enjoy that hope which was infinitely more valuable. Let us in the next place ask, whether we have sufficient evidence to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the blessed Saviour of sinners will be less kind to any body else, than he was to that persecuting Saul.

The reader will undoubtedly notice, that in every form in which the common doctrine appears, it wears the character of unmercifulness; which character is

directly contrary to the character of the merciful Jesus. When the prodigal son left his father's house, his hopes of pleasure intoxicated his youthful mind, his heart palpitated for gratifications which he did not so much as dream would either ruin his fortune or become insipid. But experience taught him late what early admonition could not impress ; and he found himself in a state of wretched dependence, without power or means to retrieve a fortune foolishly spent. In this distressed condition, compelled by hunger, he frames a resolution in which there was great humility indeed, but by no means a just estimation of the mode in which his wants were finally to be supplied. He hoped to be blessed with bread in his father's house, but expected to have it for his just hire. The ground of his hope was by no means supported by the father ; but the blessing was granted in rich abundance, from the fatherly love of which he had been ignorant.

Such are the instances which the Scriptures give of the false hopes of God's alienated children, and of his divine mercy as a never failing security after all creature means have failed. The whole of the 107th Psalm is occupied with those instances, with a sentence of which I close this subject. 'Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High ; therefore, he brought down their heart with labor ; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.'

PARABLE VIII.

• And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.—
Matt. ix, 15.

THE Saviour spake these words to the disciples of John, who asked him the reason why his disciples did not fast, as they and the Pharisees fasted oft.

In this part of the answer we find matter for the following observations :

1. By bridegroom, I understand Christ himself.
2. By bride, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is called the *bride*, the *Lamb's wife*
3. By bride-chamber is intended that pavilion of safety provided by grace.
4. The children of the bride-chamber are those, who, in their understanding, have travelled on beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, have even left John, the fore-runner of Jesus, and have, in reality, found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.
5. The dear Mediator, the devoted sin-offering, points forward to that awful period when he should be taken from all the living, die the *death of deaths* for man ; when a gloom like the shades of night should be distended over all the land ; when the most valiant of the bride-chamber should feel his courage give way, and fall before the dark powers of temptation ; when the powers of darkness should seem to riot in sport of the *Son of God*, mocking the agonies of a sinless

consecrated soul made an offering for sin ! This was a time for the disciples of Jesus to fast indeed.

ILLUSTRATION.

In Isaiah lxi, 10, the Saviour is represented as being clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments. In chapter lxii, 5, he is represented as rejoicing over his bride. St John iii, 29: 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.'

The bride, the Lamb's wife, or the New Jerusalem, is the same as the covenant of gospel mercy, as may be seen from the following scriptures. Gal. iv, 22, &c. 'For it is written that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh ; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory ; for these are the two covenants ; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry thou that travailest not ; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.' The apostle here calls Sarah one of the covenants which he calls Jerusalem which is above, who is both free and the mother of us all.

His reference to the words of Isaiah in chap. liv, 1, &c., very clearly corrects the opinion that the prophet spake to the Gentile church of believers, when he said, 'Sing, O barren,' &c., for it is evident the apostle appropriates this address to the covenant represented by Sarah. And indeed the prophet himself corrects the common opinion; for he says to this barren, desolate one, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of their habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.' If the prophet were addressing the Gentiles, he would not have told the Gentile church that her seed should inherit the Gentiles. But if he were addressing the gospel covenant in the character of one who was desolate and forsaken, he might with propriety say that her seed, or son, who is Christ, should inherit the Gentiles; which is consistent with the scripture which saith, 'Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'

PARABLE IX.

'No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rest is made worse.'—Matt. ix, 16.

CHRIST continues his answer to the disciples of John; and in this part of his answer we find matter for the following notes.

1. That the law, or legal righteousness, which they were endeavoring to acquire, was a garment extremely incomplete, he represented by an *old garment*, worn to pieces and in need of mending.

2. That the divine righteousness, whereby he should fulfil the law, in which righteousness alone man could be justified, stood in comparison to the other, as *new cloth* to an *old garment*.

3. That as a piece of new cloth put into an old garment would take from the garment whereby the rent would be made worse, so those who should use the righteousness of the Lord our righteousness, only to patch their own, mixing a little of the righteousness of Christ with a great deal of fasting, humility, and righteousness of their own, would be in a worse situation than when standing simply in the law character, to which circumstance I shall elsewhere allude.

ILLUSTRATION.

We have already seen that St. Paul was under the necessity of giving up all his hope and dependence for justification by the works of the law; the reason of which we may consider as an illustration, in part, of the foregoing subject.

1. The law could not reasonably be expected to answer a purpose for which it was not given; and it is evident, that it was not given for the purpose of giving life, or that mankind should obtain justification by it. See Gal. iii, 21: 'Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.' Rom. iii, 20:

‘Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.’

2. If the ministration of the law had been justification and life, it must have taken the ground of the gospel ministration, and rendered the cross vain. See Gal. ii, 21: ‘do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.’ Gal. iii, 18: ‘For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.’

3. As the law entered because of transgression, and that the offence might abound, it worked wrath, and was a ministration of death. Gal. iii, 19. ‘Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.’ Rom. iv, 14, 15: ‘For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression.’ 2 Cor. iii, 7, 8: ‘But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?’

4. From the preceding considerations, it is reasonable that we draw the following conclusion. If the law was a ministration of death, and could not give life, then surely it does not come within its province to deprive us of a life which it had no power to give. Hence the apostle’s argument. Gal. iii, 17: ‘And, this I say that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty

years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.'

The righteousness of faith with which the ransomed church of Christ is clothed and justified, is represented by FINE LINEN CLEAN AND WHITE ; by WHITE ROBES, clothing of wrought gold, A RAIMENT OF NEEDLE WORK. See Rev. xix, 8 : ' And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' iii, 5 : ' He that oyercometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. Psalm xlv, 13, 14 : ' The king's daughter is all glorious within ; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work.' This righteousness of God is the free gift of his grace, and is manifested for the justification of the sinner unto life. See Rom. iii, 21, 22, &c. : ' But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace,' &c.

' Where is boasting, then ? It is excluded. By what law ? Of works ? No, but by the law of faith.'

PARABLE X.

' Neither do men put new wine into old bottles : else the bottles break, and the wine runeth out, and the bottles perish : but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.' Matt. ix, 17.

WITH these words did Jesus close his answer to the disciples of John. On this part of his answer we find *matter* for the following notes :

1. That the disciples of John and the Pharisees standing in the law, or legal righteousness, not being made new by faith in Christ, are represented by *old* bottles.

2. That, standing in that character, they were no more fit to receive the spirit of the gospel, than old bottles were to receive new wine.

3. That, by becoming new creatures by the all renovating power of him who saith, Behold, I make all things new, they might be prepared meet vessels to receive the wine of Christ's kingdom, even the spirit of divine animation, which cheereth the heart of God and man.

ILLUSTRATION.

The doctrine and necessity of the new birth is rendered plain and evident by the following scriptures. St John iii, 3: 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Verse 5, 'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water; and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' That this new birth is a work not of the will nor power of the sinner, but of the spirit of God, is not only seen by the above quotation, but also fully proved by the following. St John i, 13: 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Faith, which is the medium through which this grace is communicated and wrought in the soul, is also the gift and work of God. Eph. ii, 8, 9: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves:

it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' 2 Thes. i, 11: 'Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.' The necessity of the new birth is acknowledge by Christian professors in general, but, at the same time, placed on ground which renders it ascribable to the will of the creature, and thereby rendered precarious and uncertain. By so doing, the necessity of the new birth has been used as an argument to prove that mankind, in general, will be forever excluded from the kingdom of God, on the supposition that all men will never be born again. I say on the SUPPOSITION; for surely there is no scripture authority to prove that all men will not be born again.

It would seem more reasonable to argue, from the NECESSITY of the new birth, as follows:

1. As it is impossible for any one to enter into the kingdom of God except he be born of the water and of the spirit, if it were the will of God that all men should be saved, it must then be his will that all men should be born again.

2. As has been shown, this being born again is of the will of God, and not of the will of man. Therefore there can be no more uncertainty, as to the event, than there is of the accomplishment of the will of God, which St Paul says, is, that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.

3. No reason can be rendered why God should not use all the means which he sees necessary for the accomplishment of his will.

4. From the foregoing considerations it is reasonable to conclude that the necessity of the new birth ought

to be used as evidence to prove its certainty ; for if it be a matter of infinite importance, and to be effected only by the will of God, to argue that it will not be accomplished, is as unfavorable to the divine character as it is injurious to mankind.

PARABLE. XI.

* A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax, shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*—Matt. xii, 20.

ST MATTHEW having given an account of some precautions which Christ made use of in order that the people at large might not know him ; quotes the above passage from Isaiah, as being fulfilled by Christ. See Isaiah xlii, 1, &c.

The house of Israel is here represented by the similitude of a *bruised reed*, by which is meant the low condition in which Christ found it when he came. The prophet looked forward from his day, and beholding the house of Israel in a low state of servitude, represented it by a bruised reed, and then prophesied of the Messiah and his coming, and said he would not break what little strength it retained, (which was then only in the sceptre of Judah, or *staff*, or *reed* of his tribeship,) untill he had fulfilled the law and made it honorable which I understand by his sending forth judgment unto victory. The continuance of Judah's sceptre until the coming of Shiloh, was spoken of by Jacob, See Gen. xlix, 10. It was to continue until Shiloh should come, after which it was broken : Observe, the bruise-

ed reed was not to be broken, nor the smoking flax quenched, until judgment was sent forth unto victory; which intimates that the reed would then be broken and the flax quenched. Flax is extremely combustible, and quickly consumed by fire, and as it smokes a little after the fire has passed it, before it is entirely gone; so the house of Israel is represented as almost wholly exhausted of its strength, and dying like the wick of a candle after the blaze is extinguished; but it should not be entirely quenched until righteousness should gain the victory over sin. Then was Judah's sceptre broken, and the light, strength and glory of the legal dispensation vanished forever.

ILLUSTRATION.

It is remarkable that notwithstanding the low condition of the Jews, and their servitude under the Roman yoke, yet they were preserved, and retained their ecclesiastical order until they had an opportunity to exercise that power in fulfilling the scripture prophecies concerning the Messiah. Had the sceptre departed from Judah, or a lawgiver from between his feet, before Shiloh came, and that people had been broken up and dispersed as they were immediately afterwards, they would not have been in a situation to fulfill all that the prophets had written concerning Christ; they could not have said, *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.*

If we duly consider that all the other tribes of the children of Israel had become extinct before the coming of Shiloh, and even that of Judah was reduced to contemptible weakness, yet preserved for the fulfillment

of Jacob's prophecy, and the many other prophecies concerning the Messiah, it must operate as a very forcible argument in favor of the divinity of those scriptures which were so remarkably fulfilled. What power of human wisdom, can we reasonably suppose, could discover to the dying patriarch that Judah would be the only surviving tribe, and that he would survive until the coming of Shiloh? If we attribute this to the sagacity of human wisdom, with a design to avoid the idea of divine inspiration, we only defeat our object, by giving to human wisdom that prescience which amounts to as much as divine inspiration.

PARABLE XII.

'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.'—Matt. xii, 43, 44, 45.

1. OUR Saviour in the above passage represents the then present generation of the house of Israel by a man who had an unclean spirit.

2. He shows that the unclean spirit which they were possessed of, at his coming would seem to be cast out; but that seven evil spirits would succeed and stand in the room of one.

3. He shows that that generation would not find the rest which remaineth for the people of God, on account of their unbelief.

4. He shows that they would enter into the old house of the law, or covenant of works, which they would find first empty.

5. 'Swept and garnished,' that is, made ready for their entrance; as they were not acquainted with the gospel, they would attempt safety in the covenant of works, in which situation they are seven times worse than before; which circumstances will be particularly described in notes on Luke xvi, last paragraph.

ILLUSTRATION.

It is generally understood that the Saviour pointed to a future state of endless punishment, when he said, 'the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation.' This is supposing that Christ, at that time, judged and condemned that generation to a state of endless misery. Yet this same divine teacher says, 'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.' It is evident that if Christ, condemned that generation in the sense above stated, he condemned it so as to render it impossible for him to do what God sent him to do, namely, to SAVE, and not CONDEMN. The mistake which has been made by supposing that the saviour alluded to a future state of endless misery in those passages where he speaks of the situation into which the Jews would be immediately brought, has given a general character to the preaching of the christian clergy, which is very different from that of the ministry of reconciliation. There is a passage in Luke xiii, which has been made frequent use of in the way of the above named mistake; and if it were not for the special demands of christian charity, it would be next to impossible to believe those sincere who misapply that text. It reads as follows: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kil-

lest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate:’ At this colon it is customary to stop short, and apply the text to the eternal destruction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, accompanying the application with an animadversion on the conduct of the Jews, by which they justly merited such punishment. However, the conclusion of the verse fully refutes such an application, and renders those who make the mistake as destitute of an excuse, at least, as the Jews were who denied Christ. See the text: ‘And verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ This precious prophecy, because it contains a declaration of mercy to the blinded house of Israel, is as much neglected by teachers in general, as the Saviour was by those to whom this merciful prophecy was spoken. The prayer of our Saviour on the cross is a complete refutation of all the arguments which are made use of to prove the sins of the Jews, in rejecting Christ, UNPARDONABLE, as is generally represented: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ Who were those who knew not what they did? See the answer in Acts xiii, 27, 28, 29: ‘For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.’

If the Saviour had before judged those people to an endless state of punishment, or had represented their sins as *unpardonable*, where is the propriety of his praying to his Father, in the hour of his death, to forgive them? Here was a glorious display of the power of that love which triumphed over sin and death in the person of Jesus. How contrary is it to the very spirit of the gospel, to suppose that the sin of the Jews triumphed over the love of him who died for them, and prayed his Father to forgive them? Can we reasonably suppose that this prayer was contrary to the will of God in the plan of grace? Will it do to conclude that Jesus made this prayer without faith? The plain fact is, the common opinion makes the death of Christ void, makes his prayer void, makes his faith void, and, in a word, makes his gospel void. Hence it is evident that we ought to be cautious not to explain the scriptures in such a way as to confound them, or to contradict the grand design of the gospel dispensation. We ought to remember and keep it in mind, that God will never suffer any opposition to his gospel, to defeat his own plan of divine grace.

PARABLE XIII.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye

root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.'—Matt. xiii, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

THE reader, by casting an eye on the preceding paragraphs of this chapter, will find the above text introduced by an explanation of a preceding parable, in which a sower is represented sowing his seed; the seed falling in different situations and on different grounds, &c. Different effects were the consequence, as is shown in the explanation. Christ then goes on to give further intimations of what would happen, or come to pass, likening his kingdom, in the gospel dispensation, as follows: 1. Himself, to a sower of good seed. 2. The word of the kingdom, to good seed that was sown. 3. Man to whom the gospel was preached, to a field, whose owner is Christ. 4. He foreshoweth a declension in the religion which he was introducing, even a state of carelessness and inattention, by men sleeping. 5. The introduction of false doctrines into the church, is signified by an enemy's sowing tares among wheat. 6. He shows that falsehood would be mixed with truth, in the understandings of christians, by the tares appearing among the *wheat*. 7. The desire of professors to purge false ideas and notions out of the church, is represented by servants asking leave to gather tares from among wheat. 8. The unskilfulness of those professors, even all of those who vainly fancy themselves capable of purging Christendom of errors, is shown in the answer to the servants, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.' 9. That it was the will of the Saviour that false doctrines should be imbibed until their fruits should come to maturity, is

shown in that he saith, 'Let both grow together until the time of harvest.' 10. The day of trial is represented by a harvest, or (as in the explanation of his parable by Christ himself) the end of the world; the word world having the same signification as that of age. 11. An all glorious manifestation of the gospel of reconciliation in its divine purity through the ministry of the servants of the Lord, is represented by reapers sent forth; which reapers, or angels, (as in the explanations) signify the faithful laborers whom the Lord will send forth into his plenteous harvest. I view them by an eye of faith; my eyes are greatly satisfied, and my heart leapeth for joy: O my God, make me more like them. The time is coming, when the Lord will make his angels messengers, and his ministers a flaming fire indeed; when Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye; and to them shall be given power to bind *error* with the strong cords of argument, and to burn it with the fervent fire of divine truth and love; and to gather the glorious truths and promise of the gospel into a safe situation, secure from being any more adulterated with falsehood; which is represented by wheat gathered into the barn separated from tares.

ILLUSTRATION.

To make the foregoing parable signify the endless misery of the wicked part of the world, it is usually understood as follows:

1. By good seed are meant good men, who believe in Christ, and are his true disciples in this world.

2. By tares are meant impenitent unbelievers, who, from hardness of heart and blindness of mind, reject

the invitations of the gospel, and refuse the light which God has sent.

3. By the tares and wheat growing together until the time of harvest is meant, that the righteous and the wicked live together, in this world, sharing the privileges of providence in common. *

4. The harvest, or end of the world, means the dissolution of this material earth by fire.

5. The gathering of the tares together, binding them in bundles and burning them, is to be understood to mean the casting of the wicked unbelievers into a state of inconceivable torment, where their misery will never end.

6. The gathering of the wheat into the barn, means the acceptance of the righteous into the kingdom of everlasting bliss.

Let us now look and see how such an explanation may be justified by the text. If tares, in the parable, mean wicked men, what does the text mean by saying that while *men slept* an enemy came and sowed *tares* among the wheat, and went his way? Here the reader is called upon to exercise candor. Who were those *men*, who slept at the time this enemy sowed tares among the wheat? Were those men righteous or wicked? It seems that their getting so much off of their guard as to be asleep, gave this enemy an opportunity of sowing his tares. But the above explanation supposes that the wicked are the tares. Jesus says, in the explanation of this parable, that he who sowed the tares is the devil. If then tares mean unbelievers, what is meant by the devil's sowing them among the righteous, or the wheat? It is disagreeable even to state any thing so absurd as this erroneous opinion appears to be. But that the matter may be so stated

that none may misunderstand, the facts may stand thus: If the wheat mean righteous people, then the Son of man sowed righteous people in this world. If wicked people are the tares, then the devil sowed wicked people in this world, while the righteous were asleep! As no reasonable person can believe that the devil sowed wicked men in this world, so, it should seem, no person in the free exercise of his reason, can believe that tares, in the text, mean wicked men. Yet if we admit the wild notion of Christ's sowing the righteous in this world, and of the devil's sowing the wicked here among them, what will be the consequences? Who did Christ come to save? The righteous? No, he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If tares can be converted into wheat, which must be supposable according to the common opinion, then it would be a waste to cast away or burn the tares. He that said, 'Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost,' will never burn tares, if he can convert them into wheat, as easily as he could feed the multitudes which he did with so small a quantity of provision.

Let us look again and see if there be any analogy between the foregoing sentiments and the context which introduces this parable.

As is observed in the notes, the reader may find this parable introduced by an explanation of a preceding parable. 'Behold a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched; and, because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns

sprang up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.' As is shown in the explanation which Christ gave the above parable, he evidently meant to represent the gospel which he preached by seed which the sower sowed, the different hearers of the word, by the different soils into which the seed fell, &c. See the *explanation*. 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet he hath not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word by and by he is offended. He also that received seed, among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.'

With the above explanation, Jesus introduced the parable of the tares of the field. Now as Jesus evidently means to represent the word of his kingdom, which he preached, by the seed which fell in different grounds, where is the propriety in supposing that he means men and women by the good seed which he sowed in his field? or by tares which the enemy sowed?

If we are disposed to use the words of our blessed Redeemer in a candid manner, and learn his meaning

by a careful connexion of the sacred text, it will appear very evident that the above notes on the parable of the tares of the field embrace the general ideas there communicated. Wheat is by no means an unsuitable emblem of the word of the gospel, the true doctrine of divine life. Nor are tares of a very different character from false doctrines, which make many appearances like the truth, as tares do like wheat, when in the blade. As tares are of a hurtful nature among wheat, choking it and rendering the harvest light, so are the false doctrines in the christian church; they have choked the pure word of life, and while they have flourished themselves, the truth seemed to wither away. It does not appear at all unlikely, that by harvest, or end of the world, the Saviour might mean the same which he communicated to his servant John on the isle of Patmos, relative to the close of the reign of the beast. It is then that an angel comes down from heaven with a chain, and binds the old serpent, the devil, who sowed the tares. This angel, no doubt, signifies the ministry of the two witnesses, after they are quickened with the spirit of life from God. St. Paul directs us to the same event, and gives it a similiar appearance in 2 Thes. ii, 7, 8: 'For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.' The present is the day in which these scriptures are receiving their fulfilment. The day of the Lord is already come; and it burns like an oven. It is manifested by fire, and shall try every man's works, or doctrines, by fire. Those doctrines which are justly represented by tares, are also represented by St Paul by hay,

wood and stubble ; these are to be burnt, and the possessors of them, and those who framed them, are to suffer loss. See 1 Cor. iii, 15: ' If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.' It is well to notice that when the true light advances, and the darkness is fleeing away, the ministers of darkness cry out against the prevailing errors of the times, and call it a day of darkness. This is described by the prophet : see Amos v, 16—23 : ' Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus, Wailing shall be in all streets ; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas ! alas ! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful in lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing : for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord. Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord ! to what end is it for you ? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him ; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light ? even very dark, and no brightness in it ? I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of your songs ; for I will not hear the melody of your viols.' How remarkably clear the present day is pointed out in the above scripture ! The christian clergy have been praying for a long time that the glorious day of the Lord would come, that papal darkness and idolatry might come to an end, and that the true gospel might shine so clearly as to discover

and consume all error ; and God, according to his promises, is now accomplishing these things ; but what are those who desired the day of the Lord about ? Why, groping in thick darkness, according to the words of the prophet. They are calling the husbandmen who have been laboring to raise up the tares, and to pluck up the wheat, to mourning ; and those among them, who are skilful in lamentation, are called to wailing. Who would have believed, thirty years ago, that our clergy in America would have set up a lamentation at the downfall of popery ? Would they not have rejoiced then, if they could have believed that any of them should live to see the day ? But the overflowing scourge comes too near them. They thought themselves secure ; they said, ‘ We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us : for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.’ But God answers them as follows ; see Isaiah xxviii, 16—20 : ‘ Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-places. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you : for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night ; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. For the bed is short-

er than a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.'

The doctrine of limited, partial salvation, and endless punishment, in which there is no mercy, as there is none of that wisdom in it, which is full of mercy and without partiality, is the bed, on which the wisdom of this world, which cometh to nought, has been endeavoring, in a thousand ways, to stretch that man who is more precious than the gold of Ophir; but the bed is too short. The benevolent Jesus says, notwithstanding they have decked their bed with tapestry, and with the fine linen of Egypt, yet I have not where to lay my head. His head is therefore wet with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.

How much skirting and fringing there have been to the creeds of antichrist! and after all, the covering is too narrow.*

* Although the author is still satisfied with the general use which his notes and illustrations make of the parable of the tares of the field, yet he is strongly inclined to apply the parable more especially to the age in which the Saviour lived. It seems more than probable, that by the time of the harvest, which in his own exposition he says 'is the end of the world,' he meant the end of the then present state of the Jews, as is so clearly expressed in Matt. xxiv. Nothing can be more evident than that what Jesus and his disciples meant by the *end of the world*, of which we read, in this chapter was the end of the Jewish polity and their destruction by the Romans. By understanding the time of the harvest, or end of the world to allude to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, we bring this parable into connexion with those which we have before applied to those times and to that event. And although the author now, as formerly, believes that by *good seed* in the parable, the Saviour meant the true doctrine which he preached; and by tares, the errors which would be introduced into his church, yet he is satisfied that the Saviour meant the same by casting the tares into the fire, that they might be burned, as was meant in a former parable by casting those trees which do not bring forth good fruit into the fire. In his explanation of the parable of the tares, Jesus says, 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world, (*δι' αἰῶνος.*) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire;

PARABLE XIV.

‘Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.’—Matt. xiii, 31, 32.

In this parable, Christ represents,

1. The gospel of everlasting life, by one grain of mustard seed; not on account of its smallness, or insignificant

there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.’ It is evident, by these words, that although the Saviour must mean the destruction of false doctrines, by the burning of tares, yet by wailing and gnashing of teeth he meant the suffering of the people who had imbibed those errors; for false doctrines, abstractly, cannot wail and gnash their teeth; but people who imbibe those doctrines may. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus identified in his explanation, false doctrines with those who should imbibe them, and thereby be exposed to suffer in consequence. This identifying of the person with the doctrine he receives, occurs in the Saviour’s explanation of the parable of the sower, with which explanation he introduced this parable of the tares. Let us compare the parable with the explanation. See verses 5, 6. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root, withered away.’ Here Jesus is evidently speaking of the ‘word of the kingdom.’ Now compare this with the explanation, verses 20, 21: ‘But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.’ Here we see that the person who heard the word, is the subject spoken of, and is identified with it.

If we compare the language which Jesus used in the explanation of this parable of the tares, with what he says in Matt. xxiv, of his coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem, it will not appear unreasonable to conclude that he had the same times and events in view in both passages. One remark more seems proper respecting the right application of the parable under consideration. Although we have no disposition to agree with commentators in giving to certain passages of scripture two or three applications, so as to make the same text apply to an event to take place here on our earth, and also to some event in a future world, yet we are sensible that on account of the sameness

nificancy, in itself considered ; but on account of its small appearance when it was first revealed to man on earth, by a threat to the serpent in which it was said 'The *seed* of the woman should bruise his head.' Or perhaps with more propriety, on account of its small appearance at the commencement of the gospel day.

2. Mankind, or human nature, by a field, in which the mustard seed is sown : in which this parable corresponds with the former.

3. Christ represents himself, by the man who sowed the mustard seed : His doctrine, which he preached, by the mustard seed which appeared vain and insignificant to the scribes and Pharisees ; the least of all seeds, the most despised in the eyes of vain and foolish men who judge by the outward appearance of things, without being able to scan their inward qualities, or determine their real worth. And how many millions of stupid mortals are daily neglecting those glorious truths of the kingdom of God, and the gospel of everlasting consequence and value, and running greedily in pursuit of the false glare of things of a momentary consequence, and even building their happiness in acquisitions which ought and must be their shame.

4. He showeth the future superiority of the *gospel* over all other religions, by the mustard seed, which after it is grown, is the greatest among herbs.

And lastly, That rest which mankind shall finally obtain in the many mansions of divine grace, is signified by fowls lodging in the branches of this chiefest among herbs.

of different times and events, which occur in our present mode of existence no essential injury can arise from applying a passage of scripture, which particularly belongs to events which took place eighteen hundred years ago, to events, now taking place, which bear a very near resemblance to them.

ILLUSTRATION.

In the Psalm lxxii, the doctrine of Christ is represented as follows : see verse 16 : 'There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon : and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.'

To the eye of human wisdom, the hope would be small, and the expectations faint, which should arise to the numerous inhabitants of a city, from one handful of corn, especially if that, in the room of being sown in a luxuriant vale, should be cast on the tops of mountains. Yet notwithstanding these unpromising appearances, we are assured, in the sacred text, that its fruit shall shake like Lebanon, and that they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. The extensiveness of the Redeemer's grace and kingdom is very beautifully set forth in this Psalm. See verse 6, &c : 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass ; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him ; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarsish and of the isles shall bring presents ; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall serve him.' What heart can refrain from joy on being assured that all those kings who have made their terrors known on the earth, whose wicked reigns are recorded as horrible monuments of human pride and ambition, whose very names, on account of their ungodly cruelty

are words of reproach shall finally be the humble, penitent subjects of divine grace? Is there a lover of the blessed Jesus, in the world, who can refrain from gladness when assured that *all nations shall serve* this glorious captain of our salvation?

The wonderful increase and growth of the gospel in the world, and the diminishing of false doctrines in the same ratio, represented by the parable of the mustard seed, are clearly set forth in Ezekiel xvii, 22-24: Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it, I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Isreal will plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken, and have done it.' The popular religion, which has appeared so high, green and flourishing, in which the carnal pride of man has so much delighted, is set forth in the above text, as brought low and dried up; while the true gospel, which, in the eyes of vain professors, has appeared low and dry, even as a root out of dry ground, having no comeliness, is represented as being exalted and flourishing.

Christ and his doctrine, as they appeared to the scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of divinity, was low, mean and contemptible. Many were the plausible objections which those self-styled *learned divines* could make to Jesus and his religion. He was not educated

in their *divinity school*; he was not regularly inducted into Moses' seat as a teacher; he went about as an innovator, preached any where, where he found an audience, sometimes on board of a ship, at another in some desert place, then on some mountain. He was remarkable for being a friend to sinners, and was constantly in their company, which he seemed to prefer to the company of those who supposed that their sanctity and zeal for the true religion would have attracted the attention of any true prophet of God. He forgave sinners their sins, set them at liberty from satan's yoke, and adopted them into his family. This was very disgusting to those who prided themselves on their own goodness.

If those sinners, who knew not the law, could be forgiven and admitted into divine favor, they were just as well provided for as those who had studied the law according to the rules of their school, fasted twice in a week, and paid tithes of all which they possessed. This in their opinions, must have appeared very irreligious, and demoralizing, and of a tendency dangerous to the cause of true religion. The Sabbath day was so much disregarded as to have miracles of mercy performed on it, to the great grief of these godly fathers of the church. And, indeed, as if to render himself odious in their sight, Jesus informed them for certainty, that publicans and harlots should enter the kingdom of heaven before they. What could these blinded bigots naturally conclude, but that Jesus was a Samaritan and had a devil? Thus they thought, and they treated the Lord of glory with contempt, and his doctrine with scorn. Yet this least of all seed GREW, RUN AND WAS GLORIFIED, until its towering branches over-topped all the religion of the scribes and Pharisees, put

out the light of pagan idolatry, and become very glorious. But Zion in her travels has her nights as well as her days. Since the revival of the doctrine of the old Pharisees, together with many superstitions of the Gentiles, which have been established in Christendom, bearing the name of antichrist, Zion has been in the wilderness in a low condition and desolate. But her time is now come, and the Lord is now fulfilling his promise in returning her captivity, and rendering her the joy of the whole earth. Her doctrine is as much despised by those who stand in the spirit and religion of the old Pharisees, as it was by those Pharisees when her Son preached it in the flesh. However, we have God's promise, and we may safely trust in it, that she shall be established in righteousness, and that she shall be far from oppression ; that no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper : and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment, she shall condemn.

PARABLE XV.

Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.'—Matt. xiii, 33.

By this parable we learn, 1st. The divine efficacy of the gospel on the creature who stands in need of its salvation, by the power of leaven operating in meal.

2. We are taught that all momentous truth and sublime idea : that the real nature of man absolutely stands in relation to Christ, or to his gospel, as meal does to leaven ; for, it may be observed, that leaven could have no possible operation in meal, did not the meal, in its own nature, possess a quality that is congenial with leaven.

3. The final effects of divine grace in the ministry of reconciliation, in which we look for universal submission to Christ in his glorious and ever blessed kingdom signified in that it is said, 'until the whole was leavened.'

ILLUSTRATION.

As leaven has a power to assimilate meal with itself so as to form but one mass and to constitute a unity of all its parts, it is a remarkably happy representation of the power of divine light, truth and love, in their operation in saving mankind from sin, and bringing them into reconciliation with God. To effect this reconciliation is the great object of the gospel ministry, as may be seen in St Paul's 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, where he shows the general process of bringing mankind from the system of the flesh into that of the spirit, the doing away of old things, and the making of all things new in conformity to God. See verse 41, &c: 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: Yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in

Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.'

The opinion of our doctors, that the very nature of man is so depraved that there is nothing morally good in it, and that it is totally averse to the nature of God is doubtless erroneous. St Paul says, Rom. v, 8: 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Again, he speaks of the GREAT LOVE wherewith God loved us, even when we were DEAD IN SINS.

Here let us inquire, what it was that God loved? He surely could not love that which is totally contrary to his nature; yet he loved us while we were yet sinners. It is believed, and taught, that man by sin has lost the image of God in which he was created; but this opinion does not well agree with the teaching of Christ, where he represents the sinner by a lost sheep, a lost piece of silver, and by a son who went away from his father and foolishly spent his interest. In these parables, the sinner is represented as remaining the same in nature and substance, but changed as to circumstance and disposition. If the prodigal had lost the image which he had when he went from his father, by what did the father know him, while he was yet a great way off? Again, if the sinner have nothing good in him, what does he sin against? Where there is no law, there is no transgression. The apostle says, 'the Gentiles having not the (written) law, are a law unto themselves: which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.'

The scriptures generally consider mankind to stand in the relation of children to God, though the children

are represented as alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance there is in them. Now if it be ignorance which is the cause of our alienation, it is evident that it is our ignorance which has produced all in us which is contrary to our heavenly Father. This being the case, it is easy to see what will be the consequence of the fulfilment of the scripture which saith, 'All shall know me from the least unto the greatest. This knowledge will do away every thing in us which is contrary to holiness, and mould or assimilate us into the likeness of truth. Jesus says to the Jews, if you knew the truth, the truth should make you free; and again he says in his prayer to his Father, 'this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' If the common doctrine were true, the reverse of these scriptures would be true; for if the nature of man be opposed to the nature of God, then the more we know of God, the more we should feel an aversion to him. Again, it is an invariable law of nature, as far as we can examine, that those things and circumstances which agree with the nature of any creature, are best calculated to make that creature happy. The bird being constituted congenial to the air, cannot subsist in the water, but is as happy in the air as the fish is in his native element. So of the fish, he being fitted to the element of water, is as happy there as the bird is in the element to which he is fitted. Would it then be a blessing to the bird to convert his nature into that of a fish? or would it be a blessing to the fish to be converted into a bird? It is plain that it would add nothing to the happiness of either. To change the nature of a creature, is therefore not a blessing; but to help any creature out of a circumstance which is contrary to its

nature into one more agreeable, is a blessing. The deliverance which we obtain by the gospel of Christ, is therefore represented as having such an effect. St Peter speaks to his brethren, of God's calling them out of DARKNESS into his MARVELLOUS LIGHT. Why was this a blessing? Because, darkness is not so pleasant nor so agreeable as light. But the objector must have the liberty to suggest that men choose darkness rather than light; and it is true that they do. And there are two reasons for it; the first is, they put darkness for light; and the second is, their deeds are evil. The prophet Isaiah speaks of Christ as being given for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.' As it is not so agreeable to our nature to be blind, and in darkness, as it is to see and have the light, so such metaphors are chosen to represent the salvation of man from his sin, which is so contrary and tormenting to his nature.

As a prison house is disagreeable to men, and our very nature shudder at the thought of confinement, so it is proper to represent a state of sin by such a similitude. And as freedom from imprisonment, is an object of the highest possible concern with one who is confined, so it is proper to represent the blessings of the gospel, which saves us from the bondage of sin, by such an emblem. But what propriety would there be in such representations, if the sinner were in a situation perfectly agreeable to his nature, as is the bird when on its wings in the air.

What is suggested in notes, of the universal submission to Christ in his glorious and ever blessed kingdom, may be illustrated and fully proved by the follow-

ing scriptures: Eph. i, 8, 9, 10: 'Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence: having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' It is just to notice, that as the parable represents the whole mass of meal to be leavened, which brings the whole into a unity of circumstance, so the apostle, in the above text, speaks of all things being gathered together in one, in Christ. The apostle says, as has been noticed before, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' And here he says that all things in heaven and on earth shall be gathered together in Christ? which corresponds with the words of him who sitteth on the throne, who saith, 'Behold I make all things new.' Phil. ii, 9, 10, 11: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Col. i, 19, 20, 21: 'For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell: And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him, to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' Let us ask the following important questions relative to those scriptures above quoted.

1. What is the fact which the author of those passages intended to communicate by them?

2. Is that fact clearly expressed by the words which the author used?

3. Is that fact consistent with the moral character of God, so as to be honorary to him?

4. Is it consistent with the spirit of Christ, so as to be honorary to his mediatorial office?

In answer to the first question, will it do to say that the fact which the apostle meant to communicate in those passages, is that God has made known the mystery of his will according to the good pleasure which he purposed in himself, that through the mediation of Jesus, he designs the reconciliation of but a small part of mankind to himself? and that only a few of the human race shall be finally, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, gathered together in one in Christ? Is there one single expression, in those scriptures, which goes, in the least sense, to express such a fact? There surely is not; but the whole appears to have been designed to express something very different. The expressions used in the notes seem to be as suitable to express the fact which we are after, as any at command. 'Universal submission to Christ in his glorious and ever blessed kingdom.' And in candor the reader is requested to judge, and on mature deliberation, whether there are any expressions left out of the above quoted scriptures, which are wanting to express this fact.

To the second question it may be replied, that there appears not the least ambiguity in the expressions, but a manifest design, and that by an excellent master of language, to state the fact as plainly as possible. As it respects universality, he says, *All things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth.* As it respects submis-

sion, he says, *Gather together in one all things in Christ: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. By him to reconcile all things to himself.* Thus the fact expressed is as plain as words can make it.

To the third question, we find an answer in one of the passages quoted, as follows: 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the *glory of God the Father.*'

The last question must be answered in the affirmative; for the spirit of Christ in all believers, moves them to pray for universal reconciliation to God through his mediation, which prayer is consistent with the manifest object of the mediatorial office, as expressed in the following scriptures: 'For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' 'And we know that he was manifested to take away our sins.' 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'

PARABLES XVI, XVII.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.'—Matt xiii, 44.

CHRIST here represents,

1. Human nature, by a treasure.
2. This mortal state of flesh and blood, by a field, in which the treasure was hidden.

3. Himself, by the one who found the treasure, and for joy hid it.

4. His becoming poor, that we through his povety might be made rich, and his vesting himself, through his mediatorial process, with all power in heaven and in earth ; and his obtaining power over all flesh, is represented by a man's selling all that he had, and buying the field which contained the treasure.

* Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls ; who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.—Verses 45, 46.

The ideas communicated in this parable are almost similar to those in the preceding.

1. Human nature is here represented by a *pearl of great price*.

2. The Saviour represents himself by a merchant man seeking goodly pearls.

3. The success of his mission in seeking and saving that which was lost, is shown in that the merchant man found a pearl of *great price*, and made it his own by purchase ; for which purpose, he sold all that he had, as described in the former parable. But let it be remembered, for the excitement of eternal gratitude, that this purchase was with *great price*.*

ILLUSTRATION.

The two parables foregoing, are so similar, that an illustration of one answers for both. It is acknowledged that divines, respectable for their learning, and highly

* The reader will recollect the author's remarks, in his preface, respecting the parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls ; and that of the treasure hid in a field. See pp. 6 and 7.

deserving for their assiduity in study, have understood and taught that the pearl of great price is Christ Jesus. And agreeably to this generally received opinion, it is customary to make use of the parable to awaken sinners to the importance of seeking Christ and of getting an interest in him before it is too late. However, this opinion, notwithstanding it is supported by much authority from commentators, is subject to the following objections from the scriptures.

1. Mankind in a state of sin are represented by sheep gone astray ; by the sick who need a physician ; by captives to be redeemed ; by prisoners in a pit, who are to be visited. Now if Christ be the pearl of great price, and the sinner the merchant man, it is putting the burden and labor on the lost sheep to find the shepherd ; it supposes that it is the duty of the sick to visit the physician ; of captives also to redeem those on whom they depend for redemption ; and it also supposes that those prisoners in the pit must get out themselves, and go and find somebody to assist them out of their difficulty.

2. The Saviour says, 'The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Again, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' Again, 'The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.' It is also written, 'They shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.'

3. As to the purchase, what has the sinner to sell which will enable him to purchase Christ ? and if this could be done, how could it be said, that God so loved

the world that he *gave his only begotten Son &c.*? On the other hand, is it not said, that Christ bought his church with his own blood? Are we not told, that we are not our own, but that we are bought with a price? and that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ? Though it would be uncharitable to accuse commentators of insincerity in explaining the scriptures contrary to their manifest meaning, yet we may venture to set the common opinion of the parable of the pearl of great price, to the credit of antichrist; as it is by such turns he opposes Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

The objector to the opinion that human nature is the pearl of great price, and Christ the merchant man, will say that mankind, in a state of sin, cannot justly be represented by a treasure, or pearl of great price. This objection would have all the weight which the objector would attach to it, if human nature were totally depraved, as is generally supposed. But this cannot be granted, for reasons given in the illustration of the notes on the parable of the leaven, together with those that follow.

1. When God made man, he pronounced him very good. Now if man was *very good*, could he be made good for nothing as easily as is generally represented? If the wisdom of God pronounced man very good, is it not reasonable to conclude that he was so viewed, in the wisdom of God, in relation to the whole of his existence.

2. The general tenor of the gospel represents the Saviour as giving himself for us, giving himself a ransom for all, redeeming us with his own blood, &c. Now, is not this CHRIST the same wisdom of God

which pronounced man very good, in the beginning? St. Paul calls 'Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' And is not this the wisdom of God which speaks in Proverbs viii, saying, 'Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth: and my delights were with the sons of men.'

If any change had taken place in the sons of men, after creation, before Christ, who is the wisdom of God came in the flesh, which rendered them of no value in the eye of this wisdom, then how is it possible that Christ should still set his affections and love upon them?

As it is impossible for divine wisdom to set too high value on any subject, it must be conceded, that if God loved us with **GREAT LOVE, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SIN**, that there is in us a value equal to being thus loved. If it be objected that this argument, though as clear as light, and as simple as truth, exalts the creature, wherein he ought to be abased; let it be replied, that this argument sets up no value or worth in the creature which is the result of any moral agency, or physical power at his disposal; but it shows a value or worth which divine goodness gave the creature in creation; of which, however ignorant we may be of it, divine wisdom can never lose sight.

4. The supposition that there is not a value in man as great as this argument contends for, but that he is a totally depraved creature, casts an unfavorable reflection on the Creator, turn the argument which way we will. To say that God created a being of no value, in his own sight, is more than any person can believe. And to say that he created a being of so little worth, or placed that worth on such a principle as that it

should be destroyed forever, is an absurdity of equal deformity with the other ; for the Creator might have made his creature good for nothing in the first place, as well as to constitute him so as that he would become good for nothing afterwards.

5. The process of divine grace in bringing mankind into a state of holiness and reconciliation to God, is represented by WASHING, PURGING, CLEANSING, PURIFYING, REFINING, &c. Now, none of those terms can be justly applied to that which is of no value. See Mal. iii, 1, 2, 3 ; ‘ Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap : and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ In this scripture the *sons of Levi* are represented by *gold and silver*, not on account of their moral holiness or personal righteousness, for if that had been the case, they would not have needed *purging* or *refining*. The use of fuller’s soap is to cleanse that which is valuable in itself, from filth which is not valuable.

6. If mankind be of as little worth in the sight of God, as christian divines have represented, the whole race of Adam might have been struck out of existence without making an unfavorable breach in the system of God’s creation. If so, the continuance of mankind in being, is totally unnecessary, and unworthy of a God of infinite wisdom. And yet it is evident that were

there no such race of beings as man, there would be no such office as mediator between God and man, nor any vestige of that gospel into which the angels desire to look. O what folly has come from unclean lips! How much to the dishonor of the divine economy are those vain notions which are considered as essential in the faith of christians! But there has been an hour and power of darkness with the christian church. Taught in tender youth such vain absurdities, men of abilities, of letters, of honest piety, and respectable for their morals, are zealous defenders and supporters of ideas which involve the greatest absurdities possible.

But the fact is, if man be acknowledged of any value in the sight of his Maker, and if it be acknowledged that God really has a love for him, the doctrine of endless punishment, or of eternal banishment from God, has nothing to support it. For who can believe that a God of infinite wisdom has created beings whom he has pronounced good, and very good, set his love upon them as his own offspring, created them in his own image, and after granting them many blessings in a temporal state, will make them endlessly miserable in an eternal world? Contrasted with such erroneous opinions, how does the gospel of the blessed Jesus shine! embracing the alienated sons of God in an everlasting covenant of salvation, ordered and in all things sure.

PARABLE XVIII.

* Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind : which when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.—Matt. xiii, 47.

It will be proper in this place to introduce a somewhat similar parable, which we find in chap. xxii, from the beginning to the 14th verse, inclusive: 'And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son; and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the high ways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen.'

1. Christ in this parable represents the Father of all mercies, by a king who made a marriage for his son.

2. Himself, by a prince, for whom his Father made a wedding.

3. The then present opportunity of receiving Christ and his doctrine, while he was graciously preaching the word of the kingdom, and evincing of his authority by incontestible evidences of power and grace, is signified by a wedding.

4. The house Israel, undoubtedly, is meant by those who were bidden.

5. The message, brought to the Jews by Christ and those whom he ordained to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, is represented by the call to those who were bidden.

6. The persecution which they met with from the Jews, is denoted by the treatment which the servants experienced.

7. The neglect of the Jews on this occasion, is signified by those who were bidden making light of the invitation, one going to his farm, and another to his merchandise.

8. The destruction of the Jews by the Romans, is meant by the king's being wrathful, and sending forth his *armies* to destroy these murderers, and to burn up their city; meaning *Jerusalem*.

We now come to that part of this parable which corresponds with the one above written; the same thing being meant by the servant's being sent into the highways as is meant by a net's being cast into the sea. And the reader will easily observe, that the same thing is meant, by gathering together all, as many as were found, both bad and good, as is meant by the net's gathering of every kind. And the man who had not a wedding garment, in the parable of the marriage, answers to the *bad* in the parable of the net; and the binding of the man and casting him into utter darkness, answers to the casting of the bad fish away.

But let us look carefully, that we may find who were represented by bad fish, in one parable, and by a man who had not a wedding garment, in the other.

1. By a wedding garment, I understand the righteousness of Christ, of which I spoke in notes on chap. ix, 16.

2. The garment which was not accepted as a wedding garment, was the garment which we mentioned in notes last referred to, which was prepared by putting a piece of *new cloth* to an *old garment* whereby the *rent* in the *old garment* was made *worse*.

3. By coming to the wedding, in the one parable, and being caught in the net, in the other, is meant coming into the open profession of Christianity. Now behold the group! Here are many crying, Lord! Lord! but not disposed in heart to do the will of *the Father*. Here are multitudes who have been at the trouble of *patching* up a righteousness by depending on the righteousness of Christ in conjunction with their own: The fishers of men have caught of every kind; and now comes the division. Christians by profession, who know nothing of the all renovating power of divine

grace, who call Jesus Lord, but depend on works of their own for acceptance with God, are in a worse situation than those who make no profession at all; and we may say to such, as Christ said to the Pharisees and scribes, '*publicans* and *harlots* go into the kingdom of heaven before you.'

Being cast away, in one parable, and being cast into utter darkness, in the other, represents the despairing situation into which the hypocrite is reduced by the perishing of his hope. But that the reader may have a scriptural knowledge of consequence arising from a destruction of this false righteousness, let him turn to 1 Cor. iii, 11, &c., where we find that those who suffered the loss of their own works, (which are represented by hay, wood and stubble) by fire, are saved by that same fire.

ILLUSTRATION.

As it is conceived that the notes make the main particulars of the foregoing parables evident and plain to the understanding of the reader, the following illustration will be directed to show the meaning of the application made by Christ, of the parable: See Matthew xiii, 49, 50: 'So shall it be at the end of the world: The angels shall come forth, and shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This furnace of fire is generally understood to signify a state of never ending torment in the future world. This wailing and gnashing of teeth is supposed to indicate the sorrows and pains of this state of torment.

On the contrary, the foregoing notes suggest that

this furnace of fire is a state of purification, as represented by St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii, 11, &c., where he speaks of a trial of every man's works by fire. This wailing and gnashing of teeth will be found to indicate the situation of the mind in consequence of enduring the loss sustained by this purifying fire.

With a view to cast scriptural light on this subject, it may be well to obtain knowledge of the scripture use of these words.

1. Of a furnace; see Proverbs xvii, 3: 'The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts.' Deuteronomy iv, 20: 'But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.' Ezekiel xxii, 18—22: 'Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross, behold therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.' It may be well to notice that in the above representation of the house of Israel, there appears to be much dross, some brass, some tin, some lead, some iron and some silver. The occasion of melting them in the furnace is evidently to separate the

pure metal from the dross. Gen. xv, 17: 'And it came to pass when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces.' This smoking furnace showed to the father of many nations, the trials and afflictions through which his children would pass; and the burning lamp represented the light of the covenant of grace given to Abraham by promise. Isaiah xlxi, 10: 'Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.'

The proper use of a furnace is to refine and purify; and this agrees perfectly with the representation given by St Paul in Cor., as before noticed. It is true that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a furnace which he designed for a different use, which was only to compel the people to worship the image which he had set up on the plains of Dura, or to destroy them in case of disobedience; and that the king of spiritual Babylon should have a similar invention to compel people to worship the image which he has set up is reasonable enough to suppose; but that the true God should be so exactly like the king of the bottomless pit, is not only unreasonable but unscriptural.

2. Of wailing. See Esth. iv, 3: 'And in every province whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes!' This weeping and wailing was not for never ending misery. Jerem. ix, 19: 'For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, how are we spoiled!' Nothing here about endless misery. Amos v, 16, has been noticed before, and corresponds with Rev. xviii, 15, 16, &c. 'The merchants

of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying alas, alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour is so great riches come to nought.'

These riches of mystery—Babylon, by which her merchants were made rich, are the religious mysteries and dogmas of the antichristian church. This city is to be burned with the fire of purifying truth; and while those merchants, who have lived deliciously by the sales of those mysteries of iniquity, see, to their utter confusion and mortification, all those riches coming to nought, bewail their fate in bitter lamentations, and cry out *religion is coming to an end!*

This wailing seems a very natural incident to a circumstance like that described by St Paul to the Corinthians, where he says, 'if any man's work be burnt, he shall suffer loss.' When a man suffers the loss of what he esteems great riches, by the all-devouring element of fire; when he sees the flames rising from all his treasures, which he by no means conceived were combustible, wailing and bitter lamentations are very natural consequences. But who can describe the transition of the despairing mind on discovering that this devouring element is working his greatest possible benefit! 'But he himself shall be saved; yet, so as by fire.'

3. Of gnashing the teeth. See Psal. cxii, 10: 'The wicked shall see it and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.' This grieving and gnashing of the wicked is because of the exaltation of the horn or power of the righteous. See the context, 'He hath disper-

sed ; he hath given to the poor ; his righteousness endureth forever ; his horn shall be exalted with honor.'

Who are the wicked who are grieved because the Saviour, who is the righteous, has given to the poor? Who were the wicked, who gnashed their teeth on Christ because he was a friend to publicans and sinners? Answer, it was those who viewed themselves righteous, and condemned others.

The Saviour speaks again in Psalm xxxv, 16, 'With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.' When Stephen touched the fire of divine truth to the combustible righteousness of the high priests, it produced this gnashing of teeth. See Acts vii, 51—54 : 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just one; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers : who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they *gnashed on him with their teeth.*' Why did they gnash on Stephen with their teeth? Because he told them the truth, and they could not withstand his words. The high priest had Stephen stoned to gratify their religious rage, and so it has been in all ages of Jewish and Christian churches : where the *priests* had power, they have not only gnashed on those who told them the truth, but they have persecuted and put them to death. Having now lost the civil power, they who are zealous in the antichristian and Babylonish mysteries, can only gnash with their teeth, on those who set fire

to their combustible treasures. The author of these illustrations has just witnessed a scene of this nature, which took place between two professed ministers of Jesus Christ. One is a laborer in the ministration of life, and the other a zealous laborer in the ministration of death and endless, unmerciful punishment. They meet in spiritual warfare; and the following are the circumstances of the contest. C, the minister of condemnation, asked B the minister of life, if he were not willing to allow that God has a right to do what he will with his own? B answered in the affirmative, and added, that he believed that God not only has a right to do what he will with his own, but that he actually will perform it. To this C also agreed. Thus far these two watchmen saw eye to eye: thus far they appeared like loving brothers. I rejoiced in my heart to see them thus agree, and began to cast in my mind how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. But I found something very different to attract my attention. The moment B called for the scripture authority, to show and determine what the will of God is respecting the world of mankind, C discovered evident tokens of embarrassment, and seemed rather confused. After waiting a proper time for C to decide the question, which he did not attempt to do, B brought the testimony to the purpose, showing from St. Paul's exhortation to Timothy, that *God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*. C immediately attempted to avoid this pointed weapon, by saying that the word *all* might not mean the whole. B still directed the point of the weapon to its object, by observing that as the apostle used this fact to prove the propriety of *praying for all men*, it was plain that God will have as many saved as it is right to pray for. C being in the habit of pray-

ing for all men without exception, as all antichristian ministers do, merely out of custom, he could not avoid a wound ; but on receiving it, tacked directly about, and suggested that the word *will* might not mean an effective will, so as to insure the accomplishment of the fact proposed. But here was no place of safety ; for B having in his hand a sword which would cut one way as well as the other, did not fail to make it do so, by observing that this *will* must be absolute enough to render it proper to pray for all without exception ; to which C could do no less than accede. Then B presented this unavoidable conclusion ; if the will of God in the salvation of all men, be absolute enough to justify our praying for all without exception, it must be absolute enough to justify our *believing* for all without exception, as whatsoever is not of faith is sin. By this time the tinder had received a spark, a ray of light lit on the hypocrisy of praying for the salvation of those whom he contended were destined for endless misery. C was all agitation and manifested the real spirit of the high priests who gnashed on Stephen with their teeth, because they could not withstand the wisdom of his words. There is, to besure, some difference in outward circumstances, between the Pharisees of ancient and modern times, but there is no difference of doctrine, spirit or temper.

As the ancient Pharisees believed that God had no mercy for those whom they called wicked, so they had no mercy themselves ; and this is the case, and has been, in all ages of the world. And as it is the nature of truth to cast out darkness, so those, whose light is darkness, are sorely afflicted when the true light shines.

PARABLE XIX.

'Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents : but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not : but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.'—Matt. xviii, 23—34.

THE reader, by observing the conversation between Christ and his disciples which immediately precedes this parable, will learn that the parable was intended to enforce the necessity of forgiving one another.

The particulars of this parable, I state thus :

1. The great debt which the sinner owes by reason of transgression, is represented by a servant's owing his lord ten thousand talents.

2. The impossibility of a sinner's atoning for, or purifying himself from sin, is signified by the servant's having not to pay.

3. The demand for vengeance on the soul, made by the law, through the medium of a defiled and guilty conscience, is meant by the lord's commanding the

servant, his wife, children, and all that he had, to be sold, and payment to be made.

4. A humble and contrite spirit, and its fervent supplication for pardoning mercy and divine clemency, is signified by the servant's falling down and desiring patience, and even forgiveness of the debt.

5. The condescension of the Father of all mercies in forgiving a repenting sinner, is shown by the lord's loosing the servant and letting him go, having forgiven him the debt.

6. The accountability in which men stand one to another, and the possibility of their violating the trust in which they are placed, is shown by the forgiven servant's going out and finding one of his fellow servants who owed him an hundred pence.

7. Transgression against the pure principles and dictates of that grace by which the soul is made free from condemnation, is signified by the unforgiving temper of mind manifested in the last mentioned creditor towards his fellow servant.

8. The sorrow of heart, felt by the true disciples of Christ, at beholding such a violation of the pure principles of christianity, is meant by the sorrow of the fellow servants.

9. That christians ought to lay before God such a fault, by the spirit of humiliation and prayer, rather than to fancy themselves arbiters of others' offences, is intended by those fellow servants coming and telling their lord of the disagreeable circumstances which had happened.

10. That those, who have received clear manifestations of divine mercy in the forgiveness of sin, ought, according to the forgiveness which they have obtained, to forgive their brethren of the human race all their

trespasses. Showing to others the same favor which all stand in infinite need of receiving from God, is shown by the lord's saying to the forgiven, but unforgiving servant, 'Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?'

11. That God will call to an account and severely chastise his children who wickedly depart from the grace which they have received, we understand by the lord's committing the undutiful servant to the tormentors.

12. That although in mercy we may obtain pardon, or forgiveness of the awful debt, written as with the pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond on tablets of our guilty hearts; yet, it does not secure us from contracting other debts; for, it is made evident in our text, that though the ten thousand talents were forgiven, and the servant could not be called upon therefor, the debt being discharged; yet, for his cruelty to his fellow servant, his lord committed him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. Now it is evident, that this debt is new, and of that kind which the servant could pay, which is simply to forgive his fellow servant. And it ought to sink deep into our minds, that our heavenly Father will do by us all as the lord did by his servant, if we do not, from our hearts, forgive our brethren their trespasses.

ILLUSTRATION.

Because it is said in the parable, 'And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him,' it has been sup-

posed that this must intend never ending punishments; as it is thought that the servant can never pay what is due. If this be the true meaning of the text, it is evident that the disciples of Jesus were exposed to this never ending punishment; for it was to them the parable was spoken, and it was to them that Jesus applied it, saying, 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.' If the disciples of Jesus Christ were exposed to never ending punishment for the offence of an unforgiving moment, it may be just to conclude that not only they, but every individual of the human race, will be thus punished, as it is not reasonable to suppose that any are clear from such a character. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All have come short of loving their neighbors as themselves. But the foregoing parable was evidently designed to teach real christians the necessity of the exercise of the spirit of forgiveness. See the introduction, verse 21, 22: 'Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.' Then Jesus introduces the parable, with reference to what he had told Peter, saying, 'Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened,' &c. This christian duty is urged by St Paul, Eph. iv, 31, 32: 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Such is the imperfection of our present state, and such are the various circumstances to which we are incident, that so far

from feeling himself secure from sin, the christian ought to be continually guarded on every side. So far are the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the faith and hope which the gospel inspires, from taking away our moral obligations, or lessening our duty, that these are extended and multiplied in the same ratio as the mind is enlarged. The general sentiment of divines, that believers in Christ can sin with less expence to themselves than unbelievers, is unscriptural as well as unreasonable. It may be proper to ask, if the belief of the gospel removes any moral duty or obligation to which a man feels himself holden before he is a believer in the gospel? The answer must be in the negative. Is it not a fact, that the knowledge of the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to the soul, gives the believer new lessons in morality, which are more extensive and sublime than those which he had learned before? This question must undoubtedly be answered in the affirmative. Then surely the words of our Lord will well apply in this case: See St. Luke xii, 47, 48: 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' If there be more committed to the believer than there is to the unbeliever, then certainly more is required, and greater is the punishment in case of disobedience. But the general opinion maintained by the schools, is that the sins of the unbeliever are of such a nature as to render it just that he should be punished eter-

nally, while there is no danger of the believer in this respect, though he commit much greater crimes than the unbeliever. On the one hand, we have the wisdom of God, and on the other hand, we have the wisdom, I was just going to say, of man: but the text says, 'To whom *men* have committed much, of him *they* will ask the more.' As I cannot say, the wisdom of man, I will leave the reader to say. See Titus ii, 11, 12: 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.' Now if the grace of God teaches thus, is it not supposable that we do not have this teaching unless we are taught it by this grace? And if so, then by this teaching more duty is made known, more is required, and greater is the punishment in case of disobedience.

Perhaps some inquiring mind may wish to ask, in this place, whether the grace of God, in extending our knowledge, by its teaching, and consequently our duty, is a blessing on the whole? To this it may be proper to reply, that as all rational happiness consists with a proper and just exercise of those abilities and graces which our heavenly Father has mercifully bestowed on us, the higher we rise, and the broader we extend in the knowledge of moral holiness, righteousness and truth, the more happy we are capable of being, while disposed to do our Master's will.

That man who, while he professes to glory in the goodness of God to him, and to rejoice that he has obtained a pardon of his sins for Christ's sake; and at the same time condemns his neighbor, especially if he condemns him to endless misery, is the character to which the above parable justly applies. In such

an one, where is that meek and quiet spirit which, in the sight of God, is an ornament of great price? Where is that divine charity which never faileth? Where is that faith which works by love and purifies the heart? Where is that hope which maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart?

Christian reader, our blessed Redeemer has manifested in his life, delineated in his preaching, and required in his commands, that duty which comports with his doctrine of divine mercy. He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost? God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were sinners Christ died for us. God required no condition of the creature, in relation to the above grace; man did not even ask God to make the promise of the saviour, nor did God promise this gift on conditions. This gift is the foundation of our salvation, and this foundation is universal. There is no exception; the Jew and the Gentile are here alike embraced. The one Mediator gave himself a ransom for all; he tasted death for every man; he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. Thus God has manifested pardon, forgiveness, and justification of all men, to those who know the truth as it is in Jesus. Here then is the proper ground on which the believer ought to forgive his fellow servant, as his lord has forgiven him. If contrary to the above argument, God had revealed, through Christ, that but a small part of the human race was embraced in the dispensation of mercy, and that but a few were justified in Christ, through the redemption

of his blood, then, that the character of the believer might be like that of his master, he must extend forgiveness in the same limited circle. And though he obtain forgiveness of his many sins, even of *ten thousand talents*, yet if he find one of his fellow servants who owes him but *an hundred pence*, why should he forgive him, if he does not believe him to be a subject of divine pardon? If he believe this his fellow servant to be an object of eternal vengeance, and doomed to endless torments, would it not be a light thing if he should take him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest? Surely, God does not require us to be more merciful than himself; and as a general thing, it may be remarked, that religious people copy the character which they attribute to God. The inquisition of the papists, was significant of their views of divinity; and every order of professing christians have something by which it is easy to determine the character of their deity. That unforgiving spirit which people attribute to the divine being, they will, generally, more or less, justify in themselves. But the consequences they cannot avoid: to the tormentors they must be delivered, until they are willing to forgive their fellow servants. Just as much want of forgiveness as any soul possesses, just as much torment it must feel; and it must continue to feel the same, until it ceases to possess this unforgiving spirit.

PARABLE XX.

‘For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an house-holder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was, come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning with the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, 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 unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first last: for many be called but few chosen.’—Matt. xx, 1—16.

This parable contains the meaning of the words of Christ in the close of the former chapter, where he saith, ‘But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’

1. The Pharisees are represented by the laborers who were first hired, who bore the burden and heat of the day.

2. The disciples of Christ, who were called by his

grace from among the publicans and sinners, are intended by those who were sent, or invited, into the vineyard at the eleventh hour.

3. God's divine purpose in making mankind equal, is intended by the householder's paying the laborers all alike the same sum.

4. The great objection which the Pharisees held against Christ and his doctrine being, that he preached the same favor, life and salvation to those whom they despised for their wickedness, and on whom, they looked with utter contempt for their vileness, as to themselves who were so holy in their own esteem, as to thank God that they were not like other men, is meant by the laborers murmuring at the good man of the house, saying, 'These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them *equal* unto us, who have *borne* the *burden* and *heat* of the day.'

5. That publicans and harlots should enter the kingdom of heaven before the scribes and Pharisees is shown by their receiving their money first who were hired last; which answers to the saying alluded to, 'the last shall be first.'

6. That the Pharisees would finally be accepted, is seen in that those also who were *first* hired received their penny *last*; which answers to the saying alluded to, 'the *first* shall be *last*.'

7. That the Pharisees had no reason to find fault at the salvation of those whom they called sinners above themselves, is meant by the householder's saying to those who murmured, 'Friend, I do thee no wrong.'

8. That the evil and jealous eye with which the selfrighteous look on the *gospel* salvation of sinners is *wounded* with *nothing* but its *divine goodness*, is shown by the question asked, 'Is thine *eye evil* because *I am good*?'

9. Of those who object to the justice of the salvation of the ignorant, and those who are out of the way, the question is asked ; ‘ Is it not *lawful* for me to do what I will with mine own ?’

The opinion of some, which we acknowledge appears plausible, that this parable of the laborers specially regarded those disciples of Jesus, who first entered into his service, and those who were later converted to his doctrine, and labor in his cause, seems not well to agree with the words of the Savior with which he closes the parable. So the last shall be first and the first last : for many be called but few chosen. As it is evident that Jesus *chose* those whom he first called into the vineyard of his gospel, it seems unwarrantable so to apply the last words of the parable as to mean that although they were called they were not chosen.

The mistake to which we here allude no doubt owes its origin to the conjunction *but*, found in the last verse of the xix of Matt. ‘ But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first .’ In the preceding context Jesus informs his disciples that they and all others who had forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, or wife, or children, or lands, for his name’s sake, should receive an hundred fold, and should inherit everlasting life ; and then said, as reads the translation, ‘ But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’ This conjunction *but* seems to indicate that those who were first who should be last, and those who were last who should be first, were all included in the company before designated as having forsaken all for the name of Jesus. But by turning to the passage in the Greek testament, we find that the conjunction (*De*) which is rendered *but*, may, and undoubtedly ought to be rendered *for* ; by which rendering the parable, which immediately follows the verse where it occurs, is easily understood in agreement with the foregoing notes, and also with many other passages which relate to the failure of the Pharisees to obtain, by their rituals, what the disciples of Jesus obtained by divine favor.

ILLUSTRATION.

The reader has already noticed in a digression, under a former parable, something on the divine authority of the scriptures, drawn from the blindness of the Jews, which was used as a means to convert the Gentiles to the gospel ; and also from the apostacy of the christian church, which will be a means of the conver-

sion of the Jews. This argument, which was inserted by way of digression, properly belongs to the illustration of the present subject. The reader is therefore referred to the illustration of parable vi, page 41, where this parable is illustrated as applying in a national sense. But it is well to notice that a parable, the primary meaning of which, may regard a nation, or a dispensation, may very justly be applied to minor sections of mankind, to minor events than the dispensation of law, or gospel, taken in their largest sense, and even to individuals. The reasonableness of thus varying the application of parables, is in the correspondence that there is between great and small events, as we reckon them, between large and small communities, or between an individual and many.

As the great end of all parables is to convey the truth, in a profitable manner, to the mind, the parables ought to be applied to individuals as far as they will bear, that every one may the better receive benefit from what is communicated. For instance, there is a striking correspondence between the character which the Jewish church possessed, when the Saviour was in the flesh, and the character which the christian church, in general, has exhibited for many centuries past. Of course, a parable which answers to the former character, will in many instances, apply to the latter. Likewise, as there is a resemblance between those two churches, so there is between individuals belonging to them. The Pharisee who went into the temple to pray, who thanked God that he was not like other men, especially a publican on whom he had his eye, and who, he conceived, was much more wicked than himself, is as perfect a resemblance of a superstitious christian, who thanks God that he is not wicked like

his neighbor, whom he supposes is reprobated to endless misery, as face answers to face in water.

The general tenor of this parable being to show the impartiality of the divine economy, and the riches of God's goodness in making his favor to be equally administered, is an important and well directed argument against the partial views which men entertain of the divine goodness; while it also holds up to view the odiousness of that spirit of envy which is ever wounded at the happiness of others. Perhaps envy may justly be called the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; it is the most acid fruit that grows on the stock of sin, a fluid so subtle that nothing but the fire of divine love can purge it from the soul. Notwithstanding the wants and necessities of those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were equal to theirs who entered in the morning, yet it would have been more pleasing to the envious spirit of the latter, to have had the former dismissed with nothing, or next to nothing, than to have them receive as much as they. The three main branches of this envy are the following: 1. It views its own works of righteousness immensely meritorious, and expects great reward. 2. It can see little, or nothing, in another, but occasion of censure and blame, and calculates on the great difference which must in justice be made between itself and another. 3. It is ever murmuring at divine goodness, because the undeserving receive as much as the most worthy.

These are the reasons which rendered the gospel of Christ so offensive to the Pharisees of old; and these are the reasons why christian Pharisees have so modified the gospel, that it now perfectly suits their spirit, except in the case of waiting until hereafter for

the distinction to be made. In this world, we find God to be good unto all; we find that his tender mercies are over all his works; we find him doing what the blessed Jesus taught his disciples to imitate, sending his rain on the just and on the unjust, and causing his sun to shine upon the evil and the good. What then has the envious spirit of the Pharisee got to feed upon? Answer: Its glorious prospects in anticipating a difference in the world to come, which will comport with a just retribution. Says the Pharisee, is not God a God of justice? Will he not reward his creatures according to their works? Yes, Pharisee, God is a God of justice, and therefore he 'will give unto this last even as unto thee:' Perfectly just, and therefore 'the last shall be first and the first last:' Just and equal in all things, and therefore, 'publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.'

If we may indulge the thoughts of the mind a moment, let us contemplate the vast diversity of laborers who are making great calculations on the high approbation they are to receive in the world to come, above others. Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, Christians of a vast many denominations, all right in their own eyes, all expect the preference. So sure are they of this, that they already sing their songs of joy in anticipating their own exaltation over their neighbors, are daily breathing out everlasting vengeance against one another, turning their envious eyes towards heaven to secure a verdict in their favor. So they go on challenging each other to meet at the tribunal of heaven, exulting in anticipating the distinctions which will there be made, to their everlasting joy, and to the eternal confusion and torment of each other. The

long looked for day comes, and all are summoned to judgment. With anxious expectation they wait, each expecting to receive the approbation of the judge, each expecting that all the rest must receive one everlasting frown, and feel the arrows of condemnation forever fastened in their hearts of fruitless sorrow. From the throne, now veiled in thick darkness, is heard a voice calling to the angel of the first covenant, first to read the characters of this vast multitude, and then pronounce the sentence of law; The angel reads, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God! There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God!* As if a seraph, on wings of lightning, passing through the immense hosts sealed every lip, all is profound silence. Now is the time for men to think; heretofore they talked. Let us just notice the thoughts of some in particular. Here stands in the front of all, those whose labors have been in the ministry, from the highest prelate down to the lay preacher. Not one opens his mouth; but all reflect and query as follows. The learned, the reverend doctor of divinity queries within himself, *How does that reading,*

which I heard from the mouth of the angel of the first covenant, apply to me? Has my mouth been full of cursing and bitterness? Surely I have cursed none but reprobates, I have cursed none but the ungodly sinner; this I did with a zeal, but I thought it was a holy zeal. With my tongue did I ever use deceit? Only when I thought it would benefit my church, or the order in general to which I was attached. In such cases, besure, I have misrepresented other denominations whom I viewed as heretics. But now rises the great question: Did I love my neighbors, in these instances, as I did myself? O that I could hide my heart! But here it is all spread open. Had I loved them thus, I should as soon have cursed myself.

Here are popes, cardinals and bishops, pondering on the anathemas pronounced by them against their brethren of different orders. These words, *their feet are swift to shed blood*, sound dreadfully in their ears! Nor is there one of this whole multitude who can open his mouth to accuse his neighbor, not one to thank God that he is not like other men. These words, *all have sinned*, are responded by every heart in the following language, *Father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*. A voice, the second time, from the throne, orders the angel of the first covenant to read the sentence of the law on the transgressors. He reads, *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them!* A trembling seizes every guilty heart, and one desire now breathes forth from every soul: *God be merciful to me a sinner!* A gladdening

voice is now heard to say, *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, amen: and have the keys of hell and of death; I gave myself a ransom for all; I was delivered for their offences, and rose again for their justification; I bore their iniquities, and by my stripes they shall be healed; I will now finish sin, now shall there be an end of transgression; now will I see of the travail of my soul and be satisfied.* A bleeding Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, from which there proceeds a river of blood, which deluges all the mighty hosts. Then is there a voice heard, saying, *These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

If in the foregoing remarks, the reader should meet with any just admonitions against the indulgence of envy, cursing and bitterness, which are so contrary to the pure religion of Christ, it is hoped that profit may be obtained to the furtherance of the christian charities, which forbid our judging or condemning one another; and above all, they forbid our feeling envious at the prosperity or happiness of our fellow-creatures.

How vain is that self-confidence, by which a worm of the dust is moved to claim higher favors of his Maker than he is willing should be bestowed on others! This vanity, incorporated into what passes in the world

for religion, has spread its poison through all the vitals of the church, and its doctrines are become as the blood of a dead man.

PARABLE XXI.

‘But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go to work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.’—Matt. xxi. 28, 29, 30, 31.

The reader will easily discover a similarity between this parable and the former.

1. Publicans and harlots are intended by the first son, who first said that he would not go, when he was commanded, but repented, and went.

2. The Scribes and Pharisees are intended by the son who *professed* to go according to the commandment, but went not.

3. Christ reduces the Pharisees to the necessity of giving judgment against themselves, by asking them, ‘Whether of the twain did the will of his father?’ To which they answered, ‘the first.’

4. Christ then applies the parable to his meaning, saying, ‘Verily, I say unto you, that the *publicans* and the *harlots* go into the *kingdom of God* before you.’

5. As it was shown in the former parable that the scribes and Pharisees would at last be accepted, by the murmuring servants receiving as much as others, so here the same idea is also conveyed; for it could not

be well said, that the publicans and the harlots should go into the kingdom of God *before* the scribes and the Pharisees, providing *these* were not to enter after *them*.

ILLUSTRATION.

The propriety of accommodating this parable to various circumstances of the like nature of the one to which the Saviour applied it, is evident, because the same similitude would be as proper to be used now, as when Christ was upon earth. A son who should refuse in the first instance, obedience to his father's commands, but should afterwards repent and obey, in our day, would be preferred to one, who should consent to the commands, in the first instance, but should afterwards refuse; and with as much propriety as in the days of Christ. So also, in the present day, those who sustain a character similar to those to whom the question in this parable was put, may be justly compared to the son who went directly contrary to his profession; while others who are now more particularly in the situation of publicans and sinners, may be preferred to the former, as the penitent son was to his brother.

The characters to whom the Saviour put the query, in the parable, are spoken of in the 23d verse, 'And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? These chief priests and elders of the people were those to whom the Saviour spoke, and they were those whom

he represented as going directly contrary to their profession. They professed to know and to do the commandments of God, and yet they paid all their attention to bring God's commands to bend to their vain and abominable notions and wicked traditions, by which they made the law void.

As nothing takes place without a cause to produce it, we may suppose that there was a cause which produced the circumstance here noticed. Nor is it more difficult to determine the reasons why those chief priests and elders of the Jews were in such a situation, than it is to see why many religious people are now in the same. The pure religion of God, whether commended to man in a dispensation of a law of commandments, a law of ceremonies, or in the still more luminous dispensation of the gospel of Christ, is in all ages and dispensations the same. Supreme love to God, and a love for fellow men equal to that which man has for himself, was all which the law required or the prophets taught. This love to God and mankind is the divine sanctity prefigured by the shadows of the Levitical priesthood, and is gloriously manifested as the spirit of the gospel of our salvation. To this religion the carnal mind is enmity, and its methods of warfare are as uniform as the enmity itself. Here let us raise an important query, which, if answered correctly, will serve to illuminate our subject. 1. Have not religious people, in all ages of the world, professed a love and friendship for God? Answer, yes. 2. Have they not professed a love and regard towards their fellow men? Answer, yes. 3. How do these professions consist with their standing in the character of the son who said he would go, and did not? Or how does it happen that the carnal mind, which is enmity

against God, should make the above professions? Reply: as the carnal mind can never love a character which is contrary to itself, it always reduces the character of the divine Being to a correspondence with itself, before it can exercise any love towards it. When a god is formed in the imagination, which comports with the desires of the carnal mind, then carnal mindedness is the true religion of such a God. This religion when brought into operation, acts like the carnal mind, in direct opposition to the divine law of love. Just as much as a person esteems this god, and is zealous in his cause, under this deception, just so much he exercises an enmity to the true God, and to the true religion. If the carnal mind be enmity against God and not subject to his law, then it must be hatred towards God, and hatred towards man, as the divine law is love to both. Hence it is as plain as demonstration, that whenever religious people arm their God with vindictive vengeance against any portion of his works, they have made him exactly according to the pattern of that carnal mind which is enmity to God's law, is not subject to it, neither indeed can be. Why cannot the carnal mind be subjected to the law of God? Answer, because the god that it adores cannot be subjected to that divine law of love, which requires us to love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us.

There never could exist a false religion in our world, which was destitute of enmity; for in the first place, a religion in which there is no enmity is the wisdom of God, as described by an apostle, who says, 'The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, *full of mercy*, and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.' It is very evident that a wisdom which is *full*

of mercy, and impartial, can have no enmity against any being in the universe. Secondly, a religion destitute of enmity would have nothing to recommend itself to the carnal mind, which is enmity. This carnal minded religion was in high repute among the chief priests and elders of the people of Israel, in the days of our Saviour; this was the wisdom of the princes of this world, which stood in opposition to Christ, the wisdom of God. The religion of the chief priests and elders taught them to believe that they were the peculiar favorites of heaven, that they were more holy and righteous than others who did not conform to their notions and traditions, and they were fixed in the opinion that God had no regard to those whom they called sinners; they themselves hated them, and rejected Christ because he appeared the sinner's friend. Their love to their religion, their devotedness to their god, their zeal for that darling enmity which rankled in their hearts, all led them so directly contrary to their profession, that although they believed in a Messiah, and longed to see him manifested, yet they hated, despised and rejected him, and at last put him to death. Thus they said they would go and labor in God's vineyard; but in room of doing this, they made a god to their liking, and went and labored in his vineyard. On the other hand, those people who had never clothed themselves with the traditions of the elders, entertained no high opinion of their personal holiness, whose minds were mostly taken up in things of a worldly nature, and who had no religious hatred settled in their minds towards others, had never professed to understand the mysteries of the law, nor publicly covenanted to keep the commandments, on hearing the words of Jesus, who spake as never man spake,

who taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes, who proclaimed liberty to captives, forgave the sins of transgressors, appeared to be a friend to publicans and sinners, healing all their infirmities, were melted into penitence and love, and they forsook the world and followed after their friend and Redeemer. Thus those who did not profess to follow the way of holiness, repented and went into the vineyard, and labored in the works of love.

This was equally true in regard also to the preaching of John, as the Saviour notices: see the application, verse 31, 32. 'Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.'

Are the things of which we have been treating all done away from our world, or is their resemblance still in being? Have the chief priests and the elders of the Jews not a soul on earth to support their character, or defend their religion? Is the world forsaken of all those who thank God that they are not like other men, who feel grateful that they are not like the publicans and sinners? Is there not one to vindicate the religion of the carnal mind? no one to arm an almighty power with enmity against mankind who are sinners? Is the world destitute of those righteous people who feel and exercise an unmerciful vengeance towards those whom they esteem unworthy of the favor which they have merited? Let the intolerant spirit of those who profess to understand the mysteries of the gospel, and to maintain its religion in the world, give the

answer. Let those rise up in honor of the chief priests and the elders, who declare eternal, unmerciful vengeance against those who do not submit to their inventions and traditions. Let that religion which is irreconcilable enmity against the rational creatures of God, put an end to all such questions. He who professed Jesus, was put out of the synagogue, by the chief priests and the elders; and whoever now professes that religion of Jesus, in which there is no enmity towards man, must be turned out of the church, if he belongs to one. Those who lead in the religion of the carnal mind, are an exact resemblance of those to whom Jesus spoke this parable. They say by profession, that they will work in the vineyard of the true God, but immediately we find them calling their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to a god which is the vanity of their imaginations. And by making an offering of millions of their fellow creatures to gratify the enmity and wrath of their deity, they procure for themselves confirmation, which they predicate on the endless misery of those whom they have thus offered up. Thus circumstanced, what view must they naturally entertain of him who came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, who abolishes enmity, by the blood of his cross, with a design to reconcile all things to himself, to whom are given the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, and through the redemption of whose blood, all who have sinned and come short of the glory of God, are freely justified? Can

those love such doctrine who are justified in their own religious opinions, by the *spirit of enmity*? who can entertain no idea of the love of God towards them, only in the ratio as he hates somebody else? To such the meek, humble spirit of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the *sin of the world*, is the most offensive of any thing with which they are troubled. Like the chief priests and elders of the people of the Jews, those who are foremost in this religion of enmity, in the present day, make great professions of godliness, of remarkable piety, are strict in outward ceremonies; but their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness towards those who do not comply with their religious opinions. Because their opposition to the gospel of Christ, is so deeply rooted in their religious sentiments, it is much harder for them to yield to the self-denying doctrine of divine grace, than it is for those who have no goodness of their own on which they depend. It would be erroneous, no doubt, to suppose that the chief priests and elders of the people were, by nature, more opposed to the gospel than publicans and harlots, as it is evident that their greater opposition, grew directly out of their religious education and profession. So in the present day, it is not because the christian clergy are worse, by nature, than other men, that they, in general are so much more opposed to the true spirit of the gospel, than other people. It is evident enough that this greater opposition grows out of their religious education and profession. These chief priests and elders were honorable men, they were established in a system which gave them opportunity to receive honor one of another, and this was a fatal bar to their believing in Christ. See St. John v, 44: 'How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and

seek not the honor that cometh from God only?' It was then considered dishonorable to profess to be a disciple of that 'friend to publicans and sinners.— Whosoever did this, of those who were esteemed honorable in the Pharisees religion, must suffer great loss of esteem, and be classed with those who were held in great contempt. For fear of this scorn, Nicodemus and many others of the rulers, though they believed on Jesus, did not confess him, lest the Pharisee should put them out of the synagogue. To be put out of the synagogue was as dreadful then, as to be excommunicated from a church and deprived of the privilege of communion, is now; which at present keeps too many from the open profession of what they in conscience believe. Under these embarrassing circumstances, who are the most easily introduced to a knowledge and open profession of the gospel of Christ? Answer, those who have the least of those difficulties to hinder them. Therefore we now hear from the lips of our high professors and honorable divines, contemptuous language against those who profess to believe in that religion in which there is no enmity against mankind. Hence we find but very few of those who stand in the high esteem of the carnal religion of the day, willing to part with the honors which they receive one of another, for the dishonorable reproaches of Christ.. But those who have never believed themselves so much better than others, as to say, 'Stand by thyself, come not nigh me, for I am holier than thou,' who have none of those religious honors to lose, who are already viewed, by those high in favor, as reprobates on whom God will have no more mercy than is consistent with the enmity of the Pharisee, generally hear the gospel gladly, and,

thanks be to God, many receive the truth in the love of it.

The christian reader is here cautioned against a spirit of hardness against those in the present day, who fill the place of the chief priests and elders among the Jews. It has already been hinted that their opposition to the gospel grows out of their religious education ; and this circumstance ought to excite charity, and even to move our pity. If in the days of Christ, those who were called sinners and despised by the religious Pharisees, had been brought up and educated as Saul was, they would undoubtedly have been as opposed to the gospel as the chief priests themselves.

The influence which our schools have on the minds of youth, is great and hard to be resisted. A young man of respectable parents, who under the kind patronage of paternal love and affections, receives an education which is supposed suitable for the ministry, studies with a learned divine of honorable rank in the system of honor which is at the disposal of the order, is honored himself with those degrees in learning which are highly esteemed in the world, has many powerful ties to bind him to the traditions of the elders. How can he believe the truth as it is in Jesus ? He can hardly bear to hear a word said on a subject so distant and contrary to his *pious* education ; much less, think of giving a doctrine a place in his heart which is despised as an abominable heresy, by all those on whom he depends for his growing fame, and desired additional honors. The difficulties under which the mind is confined, in such an instance, are too numerous and too considerable for a heart, like the heart of all men who love this world, to overcome.

Though more has been said already, on this passage, than was intended in the beginning, it seems improper to dismiss it without making an application of it to individuals. A profession of the gospel of Christ may be said to be answering as the son did, who said, 'I go, sir;' this was so far doing his duty; but it was the smallest part of it, and a part which he had much better have neglected, than to neglect the part which he did. He did not according to his profession, but he who refused, afterwards repented and went, and was preferred to the other. Let every professor of the religion of Christ, so far apply this parable to himself, as to examine carefully whether he goes according to his profession.

PARABLE XXII.

'Hear another parable: There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? this is the Lord's doing it is marvellous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.'—Matt. xxi. 33—43.

1. The legal dispensation, with the privileges thereof, is intended by the vineyard let out.

2. The house of Israel, is meant by the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let.

3. By the time of the fruits' drawing near, I understand the time when that dispensation was drawing to a close.

4. The prophets whom the Lord sent to the house of Israel, are intended by the servants whom the householder sent to the husbandmen to receive the fruits of the vineyard.

5. The treatment which the faithful prophets of the Lord received of their brethren, the Jews, we learn by the husbandmen's taking the servants and beating one, and killing another, and stoning another.

6. John, who was the greatest prophet ever born of woman, and those who were engaged with him in his ministry, are intended by the servants who were 'more than the first;' and these met with like treatment as the first.

7. Christ himself, who was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to seek and to save that which was lost, is intended by the son of the householder, whom the householder sent to the husbandmen.

8. Jesus points to the tragical scene of his death, which he was soon to suffer by the cruel hands of the Jews, by the husbandmen's casting the son out of the vineyard and slaying him.

9. Christ again reduces the Pharisees to the necessity of giving judgment against themselves, by asking them the question, 'When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?' To which they answer, 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his

vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.' Jesus then asked them another question, which again referred to their rejecting him, saying, 'Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' Then he applies the foregoing parable, according to the Pharisees' answer, and according to his own meaning; 'Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' By which we learn the rejection of Israel, and the granting of the gospel to the Gentiles.

ILLUSTRATION.

The apostacy of the house of Israel, their abuse of the blessings with which God distinguished them, their setting up their traditions by which they made void the law, their teaching for doctrine the traditions and commandments of men, and their rejecting the counsel of God by the prophets, and his grace by Jesus Christ, their stumbling at the stone laid in Zion, their rejecting the stone which was made the head of the corner, and their being broken off from their own olive tree through unbelief; and the Gentiles being grafted into Christ by faith; and the many circumstances attendant on those events, are represented by a very great variety of similitudes, both in the scriptures of the prophets and those of Christ. The prophet Isaiah, in a similitude of a vineyard, varied but a little from the parable above, aims undoubtedly at the

same event. See chap. v, 1—7: ‘ Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein: and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, and behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.’ Jeremiah ii, 21: ‘ Yet I have planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?’ The parable of the talents in Matthew, xxv, as well as the other two parables in that chapter, signifies, no doubt, nearly the same as the above passages from the prophets. The parable of the barren fig tree in St. Luke xiii, has a very near relation to this of the vineyard. The reader, by taking a little pains, may easily discover the primary meaning and application of all such parables.

In Isaiah's song of the vineyard, it is noticed, that when the planter of the vineyard looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes, which in the application made by the prophet, respects the wickedness of the house of Israel. See verse 7, 'For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, and behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.'

Similar to this accusation is that brought against the same people by our Saviour, as recorded in Matt. xxiii, 23: 'Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites? For ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not leave the others undone.' Again in the same chapter, verse 14, 'Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.' It was not because the high professors of religion among the Jews had not been told that God delighted more in *mercy* than he did *sacrifices*, that they were so profuse of the latter, and so utterly neglectful of the former. The real reason was, they could procure sacrifices by devouring widows' houses and other acts of abominable injustice; but this was no way to come at what their evil hearts were so averse to as *mercy*. Of this their wilful ignorance of what their prophets had told them, our Saviour did not fail to put them in mind. See Matt. xii, 7: 'But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.' Again, see Matt. ix, 10, 11, 12, 13: 'And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at

meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.' The occasion which called for the above rebuke was of weighty consideration, and which showed but too plainly the Pharisees' want of mercy, and their unjustifiable ignorance of the scriptures of the prophets on that subject.

'Behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.' What a sight must this have been to those self-righteous Pharisees! A divine teacher show a spirit of condescension and favor toward sinners! how contrary was this to the doctrine and practice of the Pharisees! No such fruit ever yet grew on the degenerate plant of so strange a vine as a Pharisee. Here stands the character of Christ Jesus and the character of the Pharisee, so situated in regard to each other, that their opposition is a perfect display of their two doctrines and their total difference. The doctrine of Christ, on the one hand, shows mercy to sinners; that of the Pharisees, on the other hand shows no mercy to sinners. The intent and meaning of the mission of Christ was to call sinners to repentance. The intent and design of the doctrine of the Pharisees was to sentence sinners to hopeless misery. The work of Christ, like that of a skilful physician, was to heal the sick. The work of the Pharisees was to thank God that they were not like other men.

What were the weightier matters of the law which the Pharisees omitted? Answer, *judgment, mercy, and faith*. If they had not been wanting in those requirements of the law, they would not have been accused of bearing, in the room of the expected grapes, *wild grapes*. They would not have been represented by husbandmen who refused to render to the householder the fruit of his vineyard. Nor would they have been subject to be reprimanded as wicked and slothful servants. These religious people surely did not neglect to have and maintain something that they called justice or judgment; no, see the passage quoted from Isaiah: 'And he looked for *judgment*, but behold *oppression*.' This *oppression* they called *justice*, or *judgment*. Why was it not acceptable? Answer, because it was that kind of judgment or justice, if it be right to call it so, in which there was no mercy, of course no righteousness. The doctrine of the Pharisees never could bring justice and mercy to agree: perhaps the reason was, they entertained the same opinion that is taught in our schools, and by our christian doctors, that the *law knows no mercy!* Here we come, as it were by mere accident, where the parable applies with all its force to the Christian church, as it did to that of the Jews. We have already seen the opposition which appeared between the doctrine and traditions of the Pharisees, and the doctrine and practice of Christ; and surely no argument is necessary to show the exact agreement between the doctrine and traditions of the Pharisees and the doctrine and traditions of our doctors of divinity. There certainly never could be more opposition in what passed for justice among the Pharisees, than there is in the doctrine of endless punishment contended for by our divines;

nor was it possible for them to administer what they called justice, in a more unmerciful manner, than our divines do in contending for the justice of never ending, unmerciful punishment. Those Pharisees adopted traditions as consistent with their views of the requirements of the law as possible, and our divines have done the same. Those denied the professor in Jesus the rites of the synagogue; and these deny the rites of the christian church and communion. Those devoured widows' houses and oppressed the poor; and these have done much more: not being content with taking the property of those whom they please to denounce as erroneous, they have whipped, confined, banished and murdered them! This they have called justice in this world, and never ending punishment they call justice in the next. The cries of the poor and needy, oppressed with ecclesiastical exactions, have ascended to heaven from this land of boasted religious tolerance.

Looking at the christian church in the similitude of a vineyard, it may be said, when *judgment* was looked for, behold, *oppression*. Or if we view it in the character of husbandmen to whom a vineyard was let out, it appears that in room of rendering the fruit in the season, the husbandmen have killed the servants of the householder, with a view to retain the fruits to themselves. Nor do they attack, with less fury, the son, who is the heir, than did those who hung him on a tree.

The doctrine of an unmerciful law, seems to be the chief corner stone on which our christian builders have erected their temple; for it is in strict conformity to a justice in which there is no mercy, that they endeavor to build, and although in the building of this Babel

their language is completely confounded, they uniformly retain the same words to express the form and figure of their chief corner stone.

The mind can hardly conceive of the greatness of the change which would be effected in our orthodox creed, should it be so modified as to admit of the full, free and perfect action of the three weightier matters of the law named by Christ, *judgment, mercy and faith!* three divine jewels of the law! In their harmony, in the point where they meet, there shine the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. This divine law, which requires judgment, mercy and faith, as its weightier matters, is represented as entirely destitute of mercy, or of any power to support the christian faith. And indeed, this representation must be maintained, or the belief of endless, unmerciful punishment must be given up; for it is as evident as demonstration, that a law which requires mercy as one of its cardinal objects, can never punish in an unmerciful manner.

If the chief priests, the elders of the people, and the Pharisees had entertained no ideas of justice, but such as were in perfect unison with mercy, and had professed no faith but such as mercy supported, it is very evident that they would never have entertained that implacable hatred towards those whom they viewed sinners, that they did, nor would they have despised and rejected Christ for being a friend to publicans and sinners. Equally applicable are these remarks to the doctors and leaders in the christian church. If they entertained no ideas of justice, but such as are in perfect unison with mercy, and professed no faith but such as mercy supports, it is evident beyond any doubt, that they would not teach the

justice of unmerciful, endless punishment, nor faith in such a dispensation of justice. Of course, they never would have been the wicked instigators of the abominable, unmerciful persecutions which have been practised in the christian church. [It is understood that the reader is at liberty to place *anti* to the word *christian*, wherever the sense requires it.] Nor would they at this moment, when the civil authority is not only out of their hands, in this country, but absolutely forbids their oppressing or persecuting, show such a veneration for, and pay almost a divine honor to those who, when they had the power in their hands, banished and put to death those who could not believe in their antichristian creeds. As the highly esteemed hierarchy of the Jewish church finally lost its power and respectability, so must it be with that of the antichristian. Not a vestige of it will be left to dishonor the Saviour, or to seduce and deceive mankind.

As the foregoing illustration sets the character of the divine law in so different a light from what is generally believed, it may be well to show in what sense the law is represented to be a ministration of death, and in what sense it is a ministration of mercy and life. This may be seen very plainly set forth in much of the writings of St. Paul, one passage of which may here be noticed. See Rom. viii, 3, 4: 'For what the *law* could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the *righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the *flesh*, but after the *spirit*.' This passage, as connected with the thread of the apostle's argument on this subject, shows the law to be a *ministration of death in the letter, but a ministration*

of righteousness and life in the spirit. This idea is corroborated by the following passages. See Rom. ii, 27, 28, 29: 'And shall not circumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the *spirit*, and not in the *letter*; whose praise is not of men but of God.' Chap. vii, 6: 'But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in *newness of spirit*, and not in the *oldness of the letter*.' 2 Cor. iii. 6: 'Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the *letter*, but of the *spirit*: for the *letter killeth*, but the *spirit giveth life*.'

PARABLE XXIII.

'And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.'—Matt. xxi, 44.

1. THE stone, of which Christ spake in the above verse, is that, which the builders *rejected*, which became the head of the corner; by which I understand Christ himself, as I have observed before on the words rock and stone, in notes on a former parable.

2. Those who fell upon this stone, and were broken, were the Jews, who *stumbled* at the *stone* laid in Zion, and were *broken* off through unbelief. See Rom. ix, 32: 'Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for

they *stumbled* at that *stumbling-stone*.' And xi, 20: 'Well; because of unbelief they were broken off,' &c.

3. Those on whom this *stone fell*, were those kings, and their monarchical powers, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. See Daniel ii, 31: 'Thou O king, sawest, and behold, a great image: this great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible.' And verses 34, 35: 'Thou sawest till that a *stone* was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.'

ILLUSTRATION.

The way in which tradition applies the foregoing parable to prove the doctrine of endless punishment, is by supposing, that by those who fall on this stone and are broken, is meant those who give up all dependence for salvation, in works of their own, and depend wholly on Christ; and that, by those on whom this stone shall fall and grind them to powder, is meant, those on whom the vindictive wrath of Christ will finally fall and endlessly remain.

This use and application of the parable is subject, among many others, to the following objections: First, If it had been the intention of the divine teacher to

give evidence of so momentous a doctrine as that of endless punishment, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have been more explicit, and that for the following reasons :

1. It is not reasonable to suppose that he would wish to establish a belief in anything, which would not work some benefit to the believer.

2. If he saw that a benefit would arise to the believer of that sentiment, from a belief in it, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have expressed the sentiment in plain, unequivocal terms ; as our preachers now do, without Christ's example.

The second general objection against the traditional use of the parable may be stated thus : If Christ had been in possession of a positive knowledge that he should finally act in an official capacity in making any portion of the human race endlessly miserable, it is most reasonable to suppose that he would have kept that to himself, for the following reasons :

1. Because he professed himself to be differently disposed from any such will or disposition. He declared that the Father did not send him into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He likewise urged the necessity and propriety of loving our enemies, and praying for them ; and he manifested this spirit even until the last, when he prayed his Father to forgive his persecutors and murderers.

2. It is not reasonable that the manifestation of such a fact could be of any service to any person living on the earth. For if this divine teacher knew that he should administer never ending punishment to any of the human family, for them to know it, in this world, could surely be no advantage to them. If it be

urged in reply, that it was necessary to have this fact known, so that men might use means to avoid it, let it be noticed, that if it can be avoided, it is by no means a fact.

The third objection to the commonly received opinion, use and application of this parable, is, that in such a use of the passage, the language of the text is not analogous with other scriptures where similar language is used. This stone is spoken of in Psalm cxviii, 22, 23: 'The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.' Again, in Isaiah viii, 14, 15: 'And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.' Christ says in the parable, 'whosoever shall *fall* on this stone shall be *broken*.' Isaiah says in the quotation above, 'many of them shall stumble, and *fall*, and be *broken*.' No reasonable doubt can be entertained that Christ had his eye to this scripture in Isaiah, when he spoke our parable. Nor will it be contended that the meaning of the passage in Isaiah is, that those who stumble and fall, who are snared and taken, are, in that situation, true converts to Christ. St. Paul's application of this scripture of the prophet, in Rom. ix, 31, 32, 33, makes our subject plain to the understanding. 'But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone

and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.' In Rom. xi, 19, 20, the apostle designates his meaning more particularly. 'Thou wilt say then, The branches were *broken off*, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were *broken off*, and thou standest by faith.' Corresponding with the quotation from Daniel, used in the above notes, to apply the words of the parable which say, 'But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder,' are the following passages: Psalm ii, 8—12. 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' Psalm cxlix, 5—9: 'Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand: to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.' Rev. ii, 26, 27: 'And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father.' It seems hardly necessary now to proceed to prove that Christ will not dispossess himself

of his possession, and that he will not make his own inheritance, which his Father gave him, eternally miserable. The words of the blessed Saviour on this subject will, however, be considered as not only important, but acceptable and edifying. See St. John vi, 37, 38, 39: 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.'

The saints noticed in Psalm cxlix, were armed with a two-edged sword, and had the honor of executing on the heathen the judgments written, of binding their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. St. Paul in Eph. vi, 17, speaks of this sword as being the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. The conquest obtained by the saints over the nations and kings of the earth, is noticed in Psalm lxxii, 11; 'All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.' And this corresponds with a vast multitude of passages of Scripture, particularly with Psalm lxxxvi, 9, 10: 'All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.'

PARABLES XXIV, XXV, XXVI.

‘ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest there be not enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came : and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage ; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh.’—**MATT. XXV, 1—13.**

‘ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one ; to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me five talents ; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me two talents ; behold I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed ; And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth ; lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest

that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'—MATT. xxv, 14—30.

'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.'—MATT. xxv, 31—46.

There are three parables in this chapter, and it is believed that they all represent the same things. And they are all applied, by divines, to what they call the last and general Judgment. The five foolish virgins in the first parable, the servant who received the one talent in the second, and those who are called goats, on the left hand of the Son of man, in the third are

supposed to represent the same characters; and divines, who believe in the doctrine of a final separation of the human family, in the future world, and the endless happiness of one class and the endless misery of the other, uniformly apply the characters above mentioned to the class which is to be finally and forever miserable.

Having the case thus clearly stated, let us next determine to whom the Saviour delivered the discourse which contains these parables. See chapter xxiv, 3: 'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' Here it is of importance that we carefully notice the fact, that all which follows in this 24th chapter and the following, is one continued reply to the several questions which the disciples asked him, as above; and also, that this long reply was delivered to the disciples only, and to them in private.

The question now arises why the divine teacher did not deliver these parables to the scribes, Pharisees, elders, doctors and the Jews in general? Again, the inquiry presents itself, why the Saviour did not urge it upon his disciples, that they should state these parables to the people, in their preaching, and tell them, in plain language, that these parables all alluded to the last judgment, and to the final separation of the human family? It does not appear that the disciples were directed to preach these parables to the people; nor can we learn that it ever came into the minds of the apostles to use these parables as they are now used, by those who apply them as has been stated, to a final division of the human family.

It is one of the most important labors, to which, what is now called, the christian ministry is directed, to urge the people to the consideration of the religion, with a view to be prepared to meet their judge at the solemn and awful tribunal, which our preachers contend is set forth in this 25th chapter of Matthew.

Our queries, on this subject, have already called up the questions, why Jesus Christ did not deliver these parables to the Jews, nor direct his disciples to state to them their substance? or why the disciples, in their ministry afterward never preached this last judgment to the people, as their master had preached it to them?

By a careful attention to the manner in which this general subject was introduced, and to the order in which the wisdom of the Saviour directed it, we may very easily dispose of the foregoing queries, and arrive at a satisfactory understanding of the several parables under consideration.

This general subject begins in chapter xxiii, which contains a denunciation on the religious enemies of Christ, such as scribes, Pharisees and doctors of the law, and on the city of Jerusalem. The two following particulars the reader is requested to keep in recollection: 1. That those on whom the Saviour denounced the judgments of heaven, he repeatedly called hypocrites; and 2. That he assured them, verse 16, that the judgment which he denounced would be executed on that generation.

When Jesus had ended his communication to the rulers of the Jews, and to all the different characters whom he addressed, as stated in chapter xxiii, he went out and departed from the temple. He had now finished his ministry, as it respected the Jews, and de-

livered to them his last message. And whoever will carefully read this chapter, will marvel at the plain dealing with which Jesus treated those dignified professors of righteousness, on whom he denounced the righteous judgments of God. 'As he departed from the temple, his disciples came to him, for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.' This declaration concerning the temple was evidently connected with what he had just before delivered to the scribes, Pharisees and doctors, in the temple, in hearing of his disciples; for Jesus had just before closed his statements to the Jews, by speaking of the desolation of their house. The account proceeds in chap. xxiv, verse 3: 'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?' The reply of Jesus commences with the 4th verse of this chapter, and continues to the end of the 25th chapter. Beginning with the 4th verse of chapter xxiv, Jesus, in his reply, speaks of the destruction of the Jews and their city, together with the signs which should precede that most terrible event, until he comes to the 36th verse. In the 34th verse he assured his disciples that that generation should not pass away till all the things of which he had been speaking should be fulfilled. The reader is requested duly to notice, that this declaration is evidently connected with the one made just before, which the reader has already been requested to keep in mind, viz. that the judgments denounced on the Jews should be executed in that generation. See chapter xxiii. 36.

There is another circumstance which we do well to notice here ; and that is, that among the things which Jesus told his disciples should take place in that generation, his coming in his glory, &c., is included. See verses 30, 31 of chapter xxiv. And it is also necessary to remark, that this coming of Christ is the same as set forth in the last parable of chapter xxv, which our divines are in the habit of calling the last, and the general judgment. As I have elsewhere, and in a number of instances, shown that the parable of the sheep and goats was spoken to represent the rejection of the Jews and their dispersion, and the reception of the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel, I deem it unnecessary to labor to substantiate this application in this place, further than to request the reader to notice that the coming of Christ, set forth in the parable of the sheep and goats, is the same coming of which mention is made in the preceding chapter, and which Christ said should take place in that generation. Whoever will carefully notice this, will be fully satisfied that our divines are incorrect in applying the last parable in chapter xxv, to a future judgment.

Let us now return to the order of the account in chapter xxiv. See verse 36, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.' The Saviour then proceeds to compare the event which he had been relating, to that of the flood, and at the 42d verse, begins a special exhortation to his disciples. The reader will keep in mind, that Jesus was speaking to his disciples only, and alone. He says: 'Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched,

and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' Here again is the same coming of the Son of man of which Jesus speaks in the last parable of chapter xxv, which our doctors constantly apply to the last judgment in the future state. But who will undertake to account for their mistake? Do they suppose that Jesus meant to exhort his disciples, there on the mount of Olives, to keep up a constant watch, looking out for the coming of the Son of man, until some period of time which is now future? Do they suppose that these disciples have, ever since the interview which they had with Jesus privately on the mount of Olives, been looking for his coming? Nearly eighteen hundred years have passed away since Jesus told his disciples that he should come with power and great glory in that generation, and exhorted them to watch that they might be on their guard on the occasion; and our divines contend that he has not come yet! And to keep along with their error, they now come forward with these exhortations, which Jesus delivered to his disciples in private, and insist that Jesus meant to exhort us, in this day, to watch for his coming! And if things go on as they have done, after we have watched all the days of our lives, the generations which may come upon the stage hereafter will be told that Jesus meant that they should watch.

It is possible that the reader may wish to ask why Jesus exhorted his disciples to watch. The answer is, because his coming would be at a time when, if they were not watchful, they might least expect him: and also because the coming of which he had spoken to them was for the desolation of Jerusalem, and if they were not on their guard they would be shut up *in the city* by armies of the Romans. Look back

to verse 15th and onwards: 'When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes. And wo unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day. For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.' That his disciples might watch and make their escape from Jerusalem, at the day and hour of danger, Jesus gave them these warnings and exhortations. It is truly humiliating to hear our divines, who pride themselves in their learning and in their high attainments in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, now urging the exhortations of Jesus to his disciples, respecting their escape from the destruction of Jerusalem, on the people of our day, as if we were in danger of being shut up in that ancient city by the Romans who destroyed it nearly eighteen hundred years ago!

Let us return to the account as it proceeds in order. See verse 45 and onwards: 'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the

Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The reader will now call up what he was requested to remember, viz. that Jesus called those on whom he denounced the judgments of heaven, in chapter xxiii, hypocrites, by which it appears that the divine Teacher intended to signify to his disciples, that if they neglected their duty, got off their watch and proved unfaithful to his cause, he would, at his coming, appoint them their portion with those hypocrites on whom they had just heard him denounce destruction. These disciples were appointed rulers over the household of their divine Master, to give to his household their meat in due season; and if they proved faithful, he promised them promotion; but if they should prove unfaithful, he would devote them to the same destruction which he had just denounced on his enemies, the Jews. This general intimation would properly apply, not only to those disciples who were then present, on the mount of Olives, but also to others, who should, in their day, be employed in the gospel ministry.

It appears evident from the above, that the Saviour was informing his disciples how it would fare with them and other professors of christianity, at the time when Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the Jews dispersed.

The 25th chapter contains three parables, which evidently relate to events set forth in the 24th chapter. But care should be taken to make the distinctions in the parables according to their evident application.—The two first, no doubt apply to the disciples of Jesus;

the last applies to the unbelieving Jews who persecuted the disciples, to christian believers who kindly entreated the disciples, and to the disciples themselves. The disciples of Christ and professors of his gospel were represented by ten virgins in the first parable; and by servants who received different sums of money in the second; and it is very clear that these two parables apply to the subject with which the 24th chapter closed. Compare the close of that chapter: 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' with the close of the second parable: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: 'The reader will do well to open to the place and carefully read, comparing these two first parables with the subject treated of in the last of the 24th chapter, which will supersede the necessity of my saying more on this part of the subject.

But the last parable has a more extensive application; for there are evidently three classes of which the judge speaks: the sheep on the right hand, the goats on the left, and his brethren who had been kindly intreated by those on his right, but neglected by those on his left.

Here again recollect, that Jesus was speaking to his disciples, whom he was about to employ in the promulgation of his gospel; and as he had just before, in this discourse, informed them that they would be persecuted by his and their enemies, he now gives them to understand, that he would treat the people, when he came to execute the judgments which he had just denounced on the Jews, accordingly as they should treat them. These disciples he calls his brethren, and assures them that any favor which the people should show them, he should consider as shown to himself; any neglect with which they should be treated, he

would accept as done to himself. The conclusion of this parable introduces those, who received the gospel through the ministry of the disciples, and intreated them kindly, to the life and peace of the gospel age; but consigns the enemies of the gospel and of the disciples of Jesus, to the age of suffering which has, ever since that generation, been the lot of the Jews, on whom Jesus denounced the righteous judgments of heaven.

The reason why these parables were not delivered to the Jews, appears evident. They were designed for special information to the disciples of Christ, which information was to them of no inconsiderable advantage. It gave them certain signs and tokens by which they would know when to leave Jerusalem, for the security of their lives; it informed them of the necessity of faithfulness in their calling, that they might obtain his approbation, at his coming, and avoid the calamities which he would at that time execute on his enemies.

I deem it unnecessary to be more particular on these parables, which were evidently introduced into our Saviour's reply to his disciples, to represent various circumstances relative to the destruction of the Jews and their city and temple; also concerning those who should profess his gospel, or propagate his religion at the time when those judgments were executed on the Jews.

The reader is here given to understand, that what goes before, in relation to the parables therein noticed, has been inserted from what the author published in the *Universalist Magazine* in 1825, in room of the notes originally written.

ILLUSTRATION.

Great use has been made of these three parables to enforce the supposed reality of a day of judgment, when all the people who have ever lived on this earth will personally appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and pass a formal trial, and be eternally rewarded according to their works. So that after mortality and all temporal things are passed away, sin, condemnation and inconceivable torments will be the endless employment and sufferings of a large proportion of the family of mankind.

Notwithstanding this opinion has been long established as one of the most essential articles in the christian faith, has been supported by the learned doctors in many ages of the church, has obtained general consent of all denominations in christendom, is now regarded by the great majority of christians as one of the main pillars on which the church is founded; notwithstanding, it is their pious and religious opinion that if this sentiment of endless damnation should lose credit and be generally disbelieved, the beautiful fabric of the christian church would give way at the foundation, and become a heap of ruins; yet, such are the contrary views which are taught in the Scriptures and infused by the spirit of divine truth, such are the sentiments of the gospel of salvation, which are entertained, that no hesitation is felt in directing an argument against this general opinion, which, without doubt, will prove it erroneous. That the opinion is an error,

is evident, and must so be considered, from the following important and self-evident facts.

1. A God of infinite wisdom, knowledge, power, goodness, justice and holiness, can never will that which amounts to an infinite evil. This proposition is surely self-evident, as there could not be found a possibility of describing injustice, or unholiness, or the contrary to infinite goodness, if infinite evil be consistent with infinite justice, goodness and holiness.

2. If any portion of the human family are finally doomed to endless misery, it must have been the divine determination, even before the creation of man. This is self-evident, as it is not possible to maintain the infinite knowledge of the Deity unless it be allowed.

No one would be unwilling to allow that the divine being knew, before he made mankind, what would be the issue of every trial which it is supposed, will take place at the day of judgment. If God knew how he himself would decide every case, it surely amounts to this, that every case was then decided in his unchangeable mind.

3. Allowing it to have been the divine determination, even before man was made, that any should be endlessly miserable, it is self-evident that this determination was not pursuant to any act, or acts, of those creatures of his, thus designed for such misery; but that it was pursuant or consonant to the divine perfections, so to determine. This being granted, all pretensions about endless punishment, pursuant to the sin of the punished, is utterly preposterous and deceptive.

4. Without saying any thing about the divine perfections, or the divine determinations, it is a self-evi-

dent fact, that neither endless happiness, or endless misery, is *according* to the *virtues* or the *vices* of mankind in a finite state and in a limited time. This we know to be self-evident, as well as we know that an hour is not a thousand years; or as well as we know that no given time is equal to eternity; as well as we know that finite virtue is not according to infinite holiness, or as well as we know that a *finite vice* is not *according to infinity*.

5. It is self-evident that there is not an *infinite difference* between the most virtuous and the most vicious of the finite, imperfect sons of Adam. And just as well as we know this, so well we know that there cannot be an infinite difference in any rewards which are according to their works.

6. It is evident that a doctrine which denies the above self-evident facts, and a thousand more besides, which might be stated, if necessary, is not a doctrine taught by the Scriptures of divine inspiration. And that the subject, to which the thread of discourse, where the above parables are found, applies those parables, has no allusion to any such circumstances or facts, as are generally supposed, will now be attempted to be shown; and that in accordance with the general testimony of the Scriptures on this subject.

The reader who wishes for scripture information on this important discussion, will by no means conceive that his patience is burdened, though the subject be labored in somewhat of a labored and particular manner. More particularly does it appear necessary to show that this 25th of Matthew has been erroneously understood, because when this is proved, it is not expected that much confidence will be placed in a doctrine which is deserted by such a main pillar as this

chapter has been considered to be. To show that the general opinion of this chapter is inconsistent with the thread of discourse into which it was introduced, it appears necessary to determine with all the certainty possible,

1. The time when the circumstances existed to which the parables allude.

2. Out of the arguments which determine the first particular, show the true application of those parables, and

3. By the assistance of the Scriptures, show that the common use of these parables is contrary to the scheme of the gospel.

It is necessary to observe that this chapter begins with the word *then*, the use of which word is to show that the kingdom of heaven would be likened unto ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five of whom were foolish, at a time which the speaker had before determined. Thus we are naturally led back into the 24th chapter in search of this time. And here it is well to notice, that our Saviour made no divisions of chapters; chapter divisions in the Scriptures being a late work for the convenience of fixing a concordance to the texts of the Scripture. When our Saviour spoke the above parables, no more than a common period divided what is written in the 25th from what is written in the 24th chapter. The last particular subject noted in the 24th chapter, is what the lord of the undutiful servant would do when he should come in a day when the servant looketh not for him. This was to cut him asunder, and to appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where there are weeping and gnashing of teeth. It will not be contested that the time of the lord's coming, here noticed, is the time when the

bridegroom cometh, noticed in the parable of the virgins; the time in which the lord of the servants came to reckon with them, noticed in the parable of the talents; and the time when the Son of man should come in his glory with his holy angels, noticed in the parable of the sheep and goats. But we must further query, when to fix this time; for it is only said in the last of the 24th, that the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him. The 44th verse of chapter xxiv, reads thus: 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' This does not fix the time. The 36th verse reads thus: 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.' By this we cannot determine the time so nicely as to fix it to a day nor an hour. Here we come to a spot where caution is particularly necessary. In the 36 verse where the Saviour says, 'But of *that day and hour knoweth no man*, &c., he evidently alludes to a particular time which he had confined within the limits of a more general one. See verse 32, &c. 'Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.' The next words are those before quoted. But of *that day and hour knoweth no man*, &c. What day and hour? Answer, a day and an hour which would certainly come in that generation.

It may now be very proper to look and see what *things* are meant, where it is said, 'This generation shall not pass till *all these things be fulfilled.*' *These things* here mentioned are all those things of which Christ spoke in the preceding part of his discourse, which begins in the 4th verse, and is an answer to questions which were stated by the disciples in the 3d verse, and consists of the following particulars :

1. Many should come in the name of Christ and deceive many.

2. There should be wars and rumors of wars.

3. There should be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, which are said to be the beginning of sorrows.

4. Some of the disciples should be persecuted unto death; they should be delivered up to be afflicted, and should be hated of all nations for the name of Christ.

5. Many should be offended, should hate and betray one another.

6. Many false prophets should arise and deceive many.

7. On account of the abounding of iniquity, the love of many should wax cold.

8. The gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then the end should come. That is, the end of the world, of which the disciples asked him in the 3d verse.

9. The disciples would see the prophecy of Daniel fulfilled, where he speaks in chap. ix, 27, of the ceasing of the sacrifice and oblation, and of the overspreading of the abomination which maketh desolate.

10. He exhorts the disciples, when they should see the prophecy of Daniel fulfilled, to flee into the mountains, if they should happen to be in Judea ; and that without any delay.

11. A woe is pronounced on those who should be with child, and those who should give suck, in that time of trouble and distress.

12. The disciples are directed to pray that their flight may not happen in the winter nor on the Sabbath day.

13. There should then be a time of great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, and such as never should again happen.

14. As no flesh could be saved, unless those days were shortened, they should be shortened for the elect's sake.

15. False prophets should arise and show great signs and wonders.

16. He exhorts his disciples against any vain pretensions that Christ is more in one place than another, and informs them that as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so would be the coming of the Son of man.

17. Immediately after those great tribulations, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light, and the stars should fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven should be shaken.

18. Then should appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and all the tribes of the earth should mourn, and see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

19. The son of man should send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, who should gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

After having stated all these particulars more circumstantially than they are here stated, he uses the parable of the fig-tree to show them the nearness of the time of the accomplishment of all things of which they had asked him. See the 32d verse and onward, which has been noticed: 'Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near even at the doors.' Then he limits all to that generation, in as positive a manner as possible. See verses 34, 35: 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.' It may be well to notice in this place the queries which the disciples stated to Christ; and what led them to propose them: see verse 3: 'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' The occasion, which led the disciples to state the above questions, is found, partly in the preceding chapter, and partly in the declaration of Christ concerning the temple, recorded in the 2d verse of the 24th. In chapter xxiii, Jesus delivered a very plain and most alarming discourse to the scribes and Pharisees; towards the conclusion of which he informed them, that the wickedness of their ancestors and their own wickedness, would be punished immediately. See verse 34, &c. 'Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you

may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.' Here observe, he informs them that judgment would not be delayed beyond that generation; which agrees with the time which he limits in the 24th chapter for the fulfilment of all things of which he spake. Jesus then in a most bitter and affectionate lamentation, informs them that their house should be left desolate, and that they should not see him henceforth, till they should say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' After closing this discourse, Jesus went out and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple; 'And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' What he had said to the scribes and Pharisees of the judgment which would come upon that generation, and of the desolation of their house; and what he said to the disciples of not one stone being left upon another, led them to state the queries which we find in the 3d verse. To those queries, Jesus directed his subsequent discourse; and all which he said, till he ended that discourse, he directed to the general topic of their queries. This discourse continues to the close of the 25th chapter. When Jesus had informed his disciples, as has been noticed, in the 34th verse of the 24th chapter, that all the things which he had informed them of, would take place in that generation, he said, as has been noticed before, see verse 36, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no,

not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.' Here it is as evident as language can make any thing, that Jesus alluded to a day, and an hour, which would surely take place in that generation. He then proceeds to show how things would be in relation to a number of particulars, at the coming of the Son of man, which he before said should be in that generation. Thus he proceeds to the end of the 24th chapter, having allusion to no other time than to that unknown day and hour which should as surely take place in that generation, as his words were true; and he begins the 25th chapter, saying, 'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,' &c. Thus we find the three parables in the 25th chapter all directed to represent, by similitudes, what he had before, *in part*, delineated. It is thought more proper to say *in part*, because there are some particulars embraced in the parables, which are not delineated in the preceding part of the discourse.

As there are in all the dispensations of divine Providence, an outward and an inward order, or in other words, a physical and a moral sense; so it is just to understand the whole of Christ's discourse, in answer to his disciples. The coming of the Son of man in the dispensation of temporal judgment on the Jewish nation, was to destroy them as a people, to reduce the remaining political power which they retained under the Roman government, to destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple, and to pour confusion and affliction on the Jews, and finally to bring on that people a time of trouble such as man never before experienced. The coming of the Son of man in the dispensation of the gospel, was to destroy the whole heavens of religious order, to put out the lights of the Le-

vitical priesthood, and to shut the door against the Jews, so that their darkness and unbelief should effect all which the prophets had allotted to that cause, and to introduce the Gentiles to the light of the gospel, to the bride-chamber of the spiritual bridegroom, and to the knowledge of eternal life.

As it seems reasonable to hope that enough has been said to satisfy the candid reader as to the time of the fulfilment of the scriptures under consideration, notice will now be taken, as was proposed,

2. Of the true application of these parables.

Some general hints having already been given, on this subject, what remains to be done may be soon accomplished.

1. The kingdom of heaven should be likened unto ten virgins, where the Son of man should come in the clouds of heaven ; as described in verse 30, of the 24th chapter.

2. The lord of the servants should come and reckon with them, when the kingdom of heaven should be likened unto ten virgins.

3. The Son of man came in his glory, with all his holy angels, when he sent his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, as described in verse 31, of the 24th chapter. .

Here the reader will observe that the true application of these parables evidently grows out of the time to which they allude. In the question stated by the disciples, they ask when the things should be, of which he had spoken to the Scribes and Pharisees, and to themselves what the sign of his coming and the end of the world should be ; and he goes on to answer them, and continues his answer to the close of the

25th chapter, as has been before observed. This is the reason why these parables have always been applied to the end of the world; and such an application is acknowledged just; but the common idea of the end of the world is unscriptural. The end of the world of which the disciples asked Jesus, and of which he spoke in his answer, was in that generation. In verse 6, of the 24th chapter, Jesus says, 'And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the *end is not yet.*' In verse 14 he says, 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, *and then shall the end come.*' St. Paul speaks of the end of the world in 1 Cor. x, 11: 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' Again in Heb. ix, 26: 'But now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' In the description of the end of the world, it is very proper to represent a cessation of the heavenly bodies, such as the sun being darkened, and the moon not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens being shaken. This description we have in the 29th verse of the 24th chapter, as what should take place in that generation. That such figures are used in Scripture to represent the destruction of cities and the calamities of nations, may be learned from the following passages. See the desolation of Babylon described in Isaiah xiii, 9, 10: 'Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of

heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.' Again, the judgments of God upon Idumea, Isaiah xxxiv, 4: 'And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.' See the destruction of Egypt, Ezekiel xxxii, 7, 8: 'And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.' The prophet Joel, chap. ii, 28, 29, 30, 31, alludes to the subject on which we are now treating. 'And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.' On the day, of Pentecost, Peter declared this prophecy of Joel to be fulfilling; see Acts ii, 14, &c. 'But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.....This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh,' &c.

3. It was proposed to show that the common use of these parables is contrary to the scheme of the gospel. It would seem that the plain, positive and particular testimony of Jesus, that those things of which he spoke to his disciples, in answer to their questions, should be fulfilled in that generation, was sufficient to show, to the satisfaction of any unprejudiced mind, that the application of these parables to a future and eternal state of existence, is totally erroneous. However, on a subject of so much consequence, it cannot be improper to show that the common use of these parables is directly against the general scheme of the gospel. God preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. See Gal. iii, 8: This blessing is said to be justification through faith, in the text referred to. Now, can it be thought reasonable to suppose that those who are blessed in Christ, with justification through faith, will suffer in never ending rebellion against God? See Rom. iii, 23, 24: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;' iv, 25: 'Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;' v, 18: 'Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' Again, do we do justice to the Scriptures, when contrary to the connexion in which a passage is found, we apply it to prove that those who are freely justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, by his resurrection from the dead, and by his righteousness, will be finally adjudged and condemned to never ending punishment, by

that very mediator who died for their offences, and rose again for their justification ?

Again, the scheme of the gospel is universal reconciliation. See Eph. i, 9, 10: 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Phil. ii, 9, 10, 11: 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Col. i, 19, 20: 'For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself: by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.' It seems that if St. Paul had known what kind of testimony would be necessary, in this day, to silence the arguments of antichrist, he could not have furnished any that would have been more to the purpose. Who will undertake to show the propriety of supposing that those who are gathered together in Christ, who bow the knee of adoration in the name of Jesus, and confess him Lord to the glory of God the Father; who are reconciled to God, through the peace made by the blood of the cross, will suffer endless exclusion from this reconciler of all things? Where is the propriety of making use of parables, which were spoken, and applied to events which took place in the first century of the Christian era, to prove the endless punishment of those for whom Christ died?

As it has been shown, in the most ample manner, that our Saviour applied these parables to represent the favorable reception with which some would be blessed in the kingdom of his grace, on the one hand, and the rejection of that part of Israel who rejected him, on the other, it may be proper to show that it is contrary to the scheme of the gospel, so to explain those parables as to prevent the return of those rejected or blinded Jews. In the discourse which Jesus delivered to the Pharisees, in which he forwarned them of those judgments to which he applied the parables, there are the following things worthy of notice, which apply to the present subject :

1. The character in which Jesus represented those Pharisees.
2. The punishment which he pronounced on them.
3. The spirit and disposition which he manifested on the occasion ; and,
4. His prophecy of their finally obtaining favor.

1. See Matt. xxiii, 13: 'But wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites? for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.' He goes on still calling them hypocrites, fools and blind guides, who paid tithes of mint, of anise and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. He likens them unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. He calls them serpents, and a generation of vipers; and many other representations he makes of their wickedness.

2. He pronounced on them the damnation of hell

See verses 32, 33: 'Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?'

3. We learn the spirit and disposition which Jesus manifested towards those serpents, and this generation of vipers, by the language of the 37th verse: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' The natural sense of the above language is that of tenderness and love, of regard and pity, of compassion and mercy. Luke xix, 41, 42, shows very plainly that the above sense is correct: 'And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' To suppose that the Son of God had no love, mercy, or pity for those who rejected and persecuted him, is to deny the manifest sense of these scriptures, and many more besides. Here then the inquirer may wish to ask, If the Son of God loved those whom he called a generation of vipers, why did he not discover to them the knowledge of his gospel, and grant them repentance unto life? To this question, the answer is ready. It would have proved the scriptures of the prophets false, which they proved true by condemning Christ. See Acts xiii, 27: 'For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.'

4. The blessed Saviour, when he pronounced those judgments on that devoted people, gave a prophetic

token of their finally obtaining a divine knowledge of him. See Matt. xxiii, 39: 'For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' It may be well to ask, who were to see Jesus and say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord? Answer, Those who killed the prophets and stoned them who were sent unto them. Those whom Jesus called serpents, and a generation of vipers. Those on whom he pronounced the damnation of hell. Those scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus calls hypocrites, and compares to whited sepulchres. In a word, they are the same to whom he said, 'Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.' The ground on which it is conceived to be safe to build our hope of the salvation of those scribes and Pharisees, is, that one Mediator between God and man, manifested a love for them, and in his love and in his pity he died for them, and rose for their justification; and that is the proper ground on which alone we can hope for the salvation of any of our sinful race. That these deadly enemies of Jesus, who were finally his murderers, were the objects of that love which is stronger than death, is evident from the prayer of the dying Jesus on the cross: '*Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*' If the suffering Son of God could look through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and send a prayer from the blood stained cross to the indulgent ear of his Father, who always hears him, to forgive his murderers, it must be a dishonoring infidelity to suppose that such a prayer will not be answered. The humble believer in Jesus will put more confidence in this prayer, than in all the fine spun metaphysical divinity of which our learned doc-

tors can boast, and with which they blind the eyes of the simple.

Notice has already been taken of St. Paul's argument, wherein he shows that those Jews who were broken off through unbelief, from their own olive-tree, should be grafted in again, and that the receiving of them shall be life from the dead. It seems not a little favorable to our subject, that St. Paul should speak of the same thing which Jesus did in promise. Jesus says, 'Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' St. Paul says, Rom. xi, 26, 'And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'

As St Paul used the circumstance of God's displeasure towards the children of Israel for the iniquities of which they were guilty, as a warning to the Christians of his day, we ought to be equally wise in using similar circumstances to like advantage. See 1 Cor. x, 5, 6: 'But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.' Verse 11: 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' This is making use of the judgments of God against sin, in one age of the world, as a warning against similar sins, in another. So ought we to do; and in this way, we may, with much propriety, accommodate the three parables in the 25th of Matthew, to the Christian church in general, to particular denominations, or to individuals.

If the Christian church have apostatized from the weightier matters of the gospel, as the Jewish church did from those of the law; and if it have, like the Jewish church, paid more attention to outward ceremonies and traditions, than it has to *faith, hope and charity*, the three precious jewels of the gospel; then it is plain, that the christian church, being in a similar situation to that of the Jewish church, is justly chargeable with the like offences. If the same spirit of persecution has raged in the Christian church as did in the Jewish church, then we may see why it is written in Rev. xv, 6, 'For they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.' If there have, or do exist, in the Christian church, an order of clergy who perfectly resemble the ancient scribes and Pharisees, whom Jesus called hypocrites, and a generation of vipers, no reason can be given why they do not as much deserve the damnation of hell. If the blessed Saviour moved with pity and compassion towards that generation of vipers, and spoke of a time when they should see him, and say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; if there be any now who possess that spirit of Jesus, they surely feel pitiful and compassionate towards those who are of a similar character, and can pray for the time to come when they may see the Saviour, and welcome him to their penitent hearts.

Wisdom undoubtedly directs all denominations of christians, and every individual professor, to examine with caution whether they have the oil of the sanctuary in their vessels with their lamps, or whether they are like the foolish virgins, possessing nothing but the outward forms of religion and godliness, without the power.

Christian prudence undoubtedly directs all to the rational inquiry, what they are doing with their Lord's money; whether they are improving by growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, or whether they are contenting themselves with the old manna their fathers collected. If the Jews who rejected the spirit of that pure religion which visits the fatherless and the widow in their afflictions, were therefore condemned for not administering to Christ in his necessities, is it not of importance that professors of the gospel ascertain how their conduct stands, in comparison with theirs who were found on the left hand, in the parable?

The close of the legal dispensation was the end of the world, in which Christ came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and then the Jewish church were judged according to their works under that dispensation, and cast into outer darkness, as we read in Matt. xxv, 30: 'And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The close of the reign of antichrist, as described in Revelations, is the day of judgment to the antichristian church, which must be judged according to its works. See Rev. xviii, 5, &c. 'For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire;

for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.' These are the merchants who have sold the treasures of mystery Babylon, or the treasures of the mystery of iniquity. These, like the scribes and Pharisees of old, are unprofitable servants, and must now appear in the judgment, on the left hand, and be cast out into outer darkness; now shall they weep and lament, that no man buyeth their merchandise any more; now will they gnash their teeth on those who burn their city with fire.

As those who received Christ and followed him in the regeneration, had thrones appointed them, so is it now; those who come out of Babylon, and rise in the spirit of life, which reanimates the two witnesses, are those whose voices are heard in heaven. See Rev. xi, 15: 'And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever.' These are they who in the present age, answer to those in the parable, who entered into life eternal.

PARABLE XXVII.

'Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.'—Luke iii, 5.

THE foregoing verse is a quotation from Isaiah xl, 4; who, by inspiration, spoke of the coming of Messiah, and the glory which should follow. And a more beautiful representation of the universal and glorious effects of the gospel of our salvation, is not, perhaps, to be found in all the allegories recorded in Scripture. This parable affords the following pleasing and soul-rejoicing truths :

1. By every valley being filled, we are taught the *blessings* of the *gospel* on the low, meek and suffering part of mankind. The meek are charmed with the glad tidings of salvation; the low despairing soul, shut up in darkness, beholds with rejoicing eyes sin finished on the cross, and immortality brought to light through the resurrection of the all-glorious *conqueror* of *death*. Suffering mortals, bound in chains of bondage, crushed with the ponderous weight of absolute power, are taught the divine certainty of the destruction of that illy exercised power which renders even life itself vexatious; and are blessed with the consolations of that hope which raises them, from dust and chains, to contemplate the goodness of the great Arbiter of nations.

2. By every mountain and hill being brought low, we understand the reduction of pride, unlawful ambi-

tion, and all earthly power standing opposed to the divinely meek principles of Emmanuel and his glorious kingdom. How humiliating is that grace, which pardons the many follies of our lives, to that towering ambition and pride so incident to mankind. How weak and impotent is that soul, who is reduced to say, 'Lord, save, or I perish.' But, O! the destiny of a tyrannical power. Ye *tyrants* of the earth, ye have magnified yourselves, ye have raised yourselves to opulence, and bathed yourselves in luxury with the sweat of vassals groaning beneath insupportable burdens, imposed by injustice on servile men. Ye have set no bounds to your *ambition*, by which *millions* are devoted to death; but your *kingdoms* are *numbered*, and *finished*; ye are *weighed* in the *balance* and found *wanting*! The high mountains of your strength must be brought low, and all your power must become as the chaff of the summer threshing floors. See Daniel ii, 35; vii, 9.

3. By the crooked being made straight, we learn, that man, who has become crooked and perverse by the serpent's guile, will, by the *power* and *grace* of the *serpent's bruiser*, be brought to divine rectitude.

4. 'The rough way shall be made smooth.' This undoubtedly refers to the way of which we read in Isaiah xxxv, 8: 'And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein.'

The way of *life*, which was represented by Christ, in a former parable as straight and narrow under the *law*, by the *gospel* is made plain, smooth, and so easy of passage, that he who reads may run, and even fools may walk and not err. In the verse succeeding our

text, the glorious consequence is thus stated: 'And *all flesh* shall see the *salvation* of God.' For confirmation in the right sense of these words, the reader will observe God's covenant with Noah; see Gen. ix, 17: 'And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and *all flesh* that is upon the earth.' And to make this *divine truth*, if possible, more evident, see Isaiah liv, 9: 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee.' To which I subjoin the testimony of him who spoke as never man spoke: see St. John xvii, 2: 'As thou hast given *him* (Christ) power over *all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to *as many* as thou hast given him.' Is this the glorious design of the gospel plan? My soul then wishes it prosperity.

ILLUSTRATION.

To render this illustration instructive, relative to universal salvation, a few of the corresponding passages of scripture will be introduced, accompanied with some remarks. Our parable seems to be predicated on the prophecy of Isaiah xl, 1—5: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley

shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and 'all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' It is well to notice the following particulars embraced in the above text:

1. The command given to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and to comfort her as a people owned of God.

2. The necessity and propriety of speaking comfortably to an individual or to a nation, is on account of the troubles, adversities, or sufferings through which the individual, or the nation has passed, or is passing, and there being a favorable prospect of better times.

3. The sufferings alluded to in the text, that Jerusalem endured, were *double punishment for all her sins*.

4. The comfort with which Jerusalem was to be comforted, was the pardon of her iniquities.

5. It is evident that this Jerusalem is the same which was in the days of Christ, from the prophet's proceeding to state the preparation of the way of the Lord, and of his glorious appearing. This is that Jerusalem of which St. Paul speaks, Gal. iv, 25: 'For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children.'

6. Jerusalem receiving double for all her sins, and being comforted with the pardon of her iniquities afterwards, shows two important truths which are generally disbelieved: 1st, that sin does not deserve endless punishment; and 2d, that an adequate punishment for sin, is consistent with forgiveness.

7. The way of the Lord is so prepared, that when his glory is fully revealed, all flesh shall see it together. Psalm xcvi, 1, 2, 3: 'O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.'

1. This new song is the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, which is sung by those standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, noticed in Rev. xv; and this is their song: See verses 3, 4: 'And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest.' By this song it appears that the judgments of God will terminate in bringing all nations to worship the true God, whom to know is life eternal.

2. The victory obtained by God's right hand and holy arm is the victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent, whose head he bruises; the victory of him who is able to *subdue even all things to himself*; the victory of him who must reign until he has put all things under his feet.

3. The salvation and righteousness which God hath made known and showed openly, are that righteousness and salvation of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. v, 18: 'Even so by the *righteousness* of one the free

gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' This *justification* unto *life*, is the *salvation* which is wrought by the righteousness of God.

4. God's mercy and truth, which he hath remembered towards the house of Israel, is expressed by St. Paul, Rom. ix, 4. 5: 'Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, amen.'

The fulfilment of all those things are noticed as follows: See Acts xiii, 32, 33: 'And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.'

5. The joy of this new song is completed with the sentiment, prophetically expressed in the most positive form, that all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. In the application of the parable it is said, 'And *all flesh* shall see the salvation of God.' Corresponding with this mode of expression are the words of the blessed Saviour in St. John xvii, 2, 3: 'As thou hast given him power over *all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Note 1st. In this passage, the word *as* connects what follows with what precedes, and shows that power over *all-flesh* was given to Christ, that he might glorify his Father according to the extensiveness of that power, in giving eternal life

to all over whom he had received power, which is *all flesh*. 2d. This eternal life consists in knowing God, and Jesus Christ whom God has sent. Therefore, 3d. The true gospel ministry consists in communicating the knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, to mankind. 4th. The conclusion is, that in the ministry of the gospel, nothing but life eternal to all flesh is dispensed. The declaration of the angel of God to the shepherds, on the birth of the Saviour, is directly to our subject: See St. Luke ii, 10, 11: 'And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' As it cannot be reasonable to suppose that this angel of God would declare an untruth, and as he spoke of *great joy*, which should be unto *all people*, the conclusion is agreeable to the scriptures before quoted: All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. The *great joy* of salvation shall be unto all people.

PARABLE XXVIII.

'There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.'—Luke vii, 41, 42.

THESE words were spoken that a question might be stated from them, which would every way confound Simon the Pharisee, who, though he had invited Jesus

to accommodations in his house, yet, entertained no very high opinion of him. Christ being seated at meat in Simon's house, a woman, who was a sinner, came in with an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping; she also washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head; she kissed them affectionately and anointed them with the ointment; which when Simon saw, he said, within himself, 'If this man was a prophet, he would know who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a *sinner*.' By this, it is evident, that Simon did not look on himself to be a sinner as was the woman, and that he believed Christ was an impostor, as he pretended to a wisdom which would certainly have enabled him to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked; and if Christ had known that the woman was a *sinner*, he would, by no means, have suffered her to come nigh him, much less to do those offices for him. These, undoubtedly; are the thoughts which Simon had on that occasion. In the parable, Christ makes his statement according to the Pharisee's ideas of himself and of the woman.

1. Christ represents himself by a creditor who had two debtors.

2. The woman is represented as a great sinner, by the debtor who owed *five hundred pence*.

3. Simon the Pharisee, is represented by the debtor who owed only *fifty pence*.

4. That sinners have no power to atone for their sins, is shown by the debtor's having nothing to pay.

5. The pardoning mercy of the gospel, by which, both Pharisees and sinners finally obtain forgiveness of sin, is shown by the creditor's forgiving both.

Christ then asks Simon, 'Which of them will love him most?' Simon answers, 'I suppose he, to whom he forgave most;' by which answer, this self-righteous Pharisee was entirely refuted in respect to his notions of righteousness. For, admitting Simon to be as holy as he looked on himself to be, and the woman as great a sinner as he supposed, she not only stood in more need of mercy than he, but would surely love Christ better in the same ratio as her sins were greater, or more numerous than his. This was something of a usual method with the Saviour: he generally confounded his adversaries on the ground of their own choice. But had Simon's sins been set in order before him at that time, as Saul's were afterwards, no doubt he would have confessed the *debt of five hundred pence*, and, humbling himself, would have rejoiced in him who deigned to forgive.

ILLUSTRATION.

That darling notion, which, in all ages of the world, has been so acceptable to religious people, that favorite opinion of a total difference, in the sight of God, between the true worshippers, and those who were not, was as much contended for in the days of Christ on earth, as it is now: and it appears evident that Simon the Pharisee was as fully in this current sentiment as are any in this day. The effect which this opinion had on Simon, was the same that is now produced from the same cause. Simon supposed that Christ was no prophet because he did not know what manner of woman that was who showed so much affection for him. See verse 39: 'Now when the Pharisee, which

had bidden him, saw it, he spoke within himself, **This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him ; for she is a sinner.**' Simon surely would not have entertained any better opinion of Jesus if he had known that he did know what manner of woman that was, and still indulged her approach to himself ; for then even ignorance could not have been pleaded to extenuate the offence. It was, therefore, the most favorable conclusion which Simon could make, to suppose that Jesus was indeed no prophet, and was ignorant of the sinfulness of that woman. It is but just to notice also, that this Pharisee was deserving of commendation, not only for being disposed to make the most favorable conclusion possible in this case, but for being one of the most decent and civil of his order, for he did not break out in a rage, and order his guest out of his house, nor did he speak of the unfavorable opinion which he was obliged to entertain of Jesus, to others, but only spake of it within himself. Therefore, while we find the sentiment of Simon perfectly to agree with the sentiment of the Pharisees in the present day, we find in his conduct an example worthy of their imitation.

The sentiment communicated by the foregoing parable and application, is subject to the following objections, from the doctrine of the Pharisees, as stated in the first illustration :

1. If the great sinner may obtain forgiveness as well as he whose sins are much less, then there is no encouragement to do well.
2. If the great sinner will, in consequence of being forgiven, love the Saviour more than he whose sins are much less, it appears to be an encouragement to add

iniquity to transgression, and to become as sinful as possible, so that the greater love may be exercised when forgiveness is obtained.

3. The whole, when put together, amounts to this ; Sin is better than righteousness, vice is better than virtue, irreligion is better than religion, and it is no matter how badly people act : the righteous, who pay strict attention to the things of religion, and abstain from a thousand enjoyments of this life, are mere fools for all their pains : it would be as well for them, and even better, if they should indulge themselves in all manner of vice and wickedness.

4. It must be evident to every rational mind, that such doctrine is false, and that whoever teaches such doctrine, is an enemy to the truth.

The foregoing objections are as naturally drawn from the doctrine of the Pharisees, which doctrine is the current doctrine of the christian church in the present day, as darkness is the natural consequences of the absence of light. These objections may be thus answered. 1. If Jesus spoke this parable, in its peculiar form, with a design to answer Simon according to his own views of his being less a sinner than that woman was, it is by no means necessary to suppose that Jesus looked on the woman to be any more sinful than Simon. Therefore, if Simon was as great a sinner as the woman, he would love Jesus as well as the woman did, when he should know himself, and feel his sins forgiven. 2. If no one can enter the kingdom of heaven, unless their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, it is evident that both ancient and modern Pharisees are equally dependent on the Lord our righteousness, for justification unto life, as others. 3. It is evident that the Pharisees

have a mistaken notion of sin, righteousness, vice, virtue, irreligion and religion. All their righteousness, their virtue and their religion is consistent with an irreconcilable enmity towards those who do not agree with them in opinions and religious rites. This enmity being directly contrary to the love which Jesus manifested towards sinners, we are authorised to believe that such enmity, and all the righteousness, virtue and religion which are consistent with it, are opposed to the Lord our righteousness and to his gospel. 4. It is evident that Jesus of Nazareth preached a righteousness, a system of moral virtue, and taught a religion, which were consistent with love to sinners, and the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, to be active in the righteousness, virtue and religion of Christ, it is necessary for us to feel the need and benefits of forgiveness ourselves, and to be disposed thereby to grant the same inestimable blessings to others who stand in the same need.

It will be granted, on all sides, that this woman possessed more of the spirit of Christ than Simon did. This is evident from what Jesus said to Simon, see verse 44—46: 'And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.' From this it is safe to conclude, that those who are disposed to pour forth the tears of penitence and gratitude at the feet of him who forgives our many sins, are possessed of more of the spirit of

Christ than those who deny him, because he receiveth sinners and has compassion upon them.

Notwithstanding Simon, who was, undoubtedly, a man of respectable character, of an honorable standing in the religious order to which he belonged, of a good natural disposition, and a tolerably discerning mind, on account of his religious education was led to think that Jesus was no prophet, and that he did not know what manner of woman that was who approached him, yet he was that prophet of whom Moses spake, Deut. xviii. 15: 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.' And he not only knew what manner of woman that was, but he also knew the thoughts of Simon's heart, and was divinely wise to reprove him, and to correct his religious errors.

And notwithstanding there are many in the present day, of whom we might speak and think as favorably as we have of Simon, who now have the same opinion of the true spirit of Jesus Christ, as Simon had, who now reject that blessed spirit of pardon and forgiveness with as much religious zeal as the Pharisees in general did Jesus, and though they call this divine master of the house, Beelzebub, and those of his household nothing better, yet this blessed spirit is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and a wise reprov-er of their unbelief and religious bigotry.

PARABLE XXIX.

'And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by him on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil, and wine, and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise'—Luke x, 30—37.

THIS parable of the man among the thieves, was spoken by Christ, to a lawyer, in answer to the lawyer's question, who asked, whom he should consider to be his neighbor. And the answer contained in the parable, communicates one of the most important duties which was ever enjoined on man.

1. A man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho falling among thieves, being stripped, wounded and half dead, is a suitable object of *charity*, which is the greatest of all christian virtues; and without which, the professor of ever so much goodness, or religion, is nothing.

2. A priest and a Levite beholding the suffering man, and treating him with cold neglect, is a just representation of the Pharisee and his religion. The

priest would, undoubtedly, have been willing to offer a sacrifice that the suffering man might bring, as an expiation of guilt; it being so, that he who administered at the altar *lived* of the things of the altar; having never learned, that *mercy* was more acceptable to God than sacrifice. And being a stranger to heaven born charity, he could leave a distressed object of pity, to the scorching heat of day, to the cold damps of night, to nakedness, and to the deathlike gnawings of hunger.

3. One possessed of the real principles of true religion, and a heart taught to feel for the distress of others, whose soul has been fired with divine charity, but does not conform to all the *customs* and *traditions* of the *elders*, wherewith they *make void* the *law of God*; is represented by a *despised Samaritan* pouring oil and wine into the wounds of suffering humanity. O, ye vain and formal professors of christianity! open your ears to reproof. What is all your profession of faith, of zeal for religion and the service of God? If you have not charity, you are nothing. He who had compassion on him who fell among thieves, was willing to go on *foot*, that the wounded might ride; neither did he ask another to show mercy and excuse himself, but having it in his power to relieve, asked none to assist in the expense. The lawyer having acknowledged that he who had compassion, was neighbor to him who fell among thieves, in preference to the priest and the Levite; Christ exhorts him to go, and do likewise.

ILLUSTRATION.

In the subject of this parable, we are presented with a striking and powerful argument, by which is clearly

shown, that the spirit of the law is mercy and life. To make this argument plain to the reader, the following particulars will be noticed :

1. The subject which occasioned this parable.
2. How the parable answers the question to which it was directed, in relation to the first subject ; and,
3. Some necessary inferences.

The subject which occasioned this parable, we learn from the context, verses 25—28 : ‘ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? He said unto him, What is written in the law ? how readest thou ? And he, answering, said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right : this do, and thou shalt live.’ Here the law is recited in its true spirit and meaning, and the Saviour said, This do, and thou shalt live. To this agree the words of the beloved disciple ; see 1 John iii, 14 : ‘ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren ; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.’ But here is room in which, he who is in darkness, will take the liberty to cavil, and ask, who is my brother ? So did the lawyer, who tempted Christ. See verse 29 : ‘ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor ?’ To answer this question Jesus spoke the parable under consideration, which may now be examined, as to its relation, not only to the question to which it immediately applies, but also to the first and major question in the general subject.

1. Why did neither the priest nor the Levite have compassion on the distressed man ? Answer, because

they did not love their neighbor as themselves. This wounded man, it appears, had a very just claim upon them, being a Jew and from Jerusalem; one of their brethren as appertaining to that part of Israel which worshipped at Jerusalem, and of course paid tithes to that priesthood. They could make no reasonable excuse for their neglect, on account of this man's having travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho; for, 1. They were travelling the same road themselves; and, 2. If they viewed him to have been a very wicked Jew, it was their duty agreeably with their office, to have made atonement for his sins, besides relieving his temporal distresses. But for the want of love, all duty is neglected.

2. Why did the Samaritan have mercy on this distressed Jew? Not because the latter was a worshipper in the mountain of Samaria; not because the Jews and the Samaritans were in the habits of friendship and good neighborhood, for the reverse in the extreme was the case; but because that love possessed his heart which answers to the requirement of the divine law, by which he loved his enemy and could do good to one who hated him. Jesus asks the lawyer, which of the three he thought was neighbor to him who fell among thieves; to which the lawyer replied, 'He that showed mercy on him.' Jesus then concludes the subject saying, 'Go and do thou likewise.' By this the lawyer was informed that he must consider those to be the objects of his love, who where as great enemies to him as the Jews were to the Samaritans; and that for him to inherit eternal life, he must love such as he did himself: which amounts to the exact requirement of the law.

3. From this divine lesson of instruction the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The divine law is a law of life, and this life being love, which is the nature of God, is eternal.

2. Jesus Christ, as the minister of eternal life to sinful man, fulfils the law and makes it honorable, administering wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to those who are his inveterate enemies: all which the law of his Father requires.

3. Whatever priesthood, in whatever age of the world, fails of administering this life to the sinner, comes as short of the ministration of the gospel, as it does of removing the distresses of sin and death.

4. As the doctrine which Jesus taught by this parable was perfectly calculated to destroy the enmity which unhappily existed between the Jews and Samaritans, so it is equally well calculated to destroy that equally unhappy and disgraceful enmity which now exists between the different denominations of the christian church.

The author of these notes and illustrations entertains no expectation that his labors, on this subject, will be any more agreeable or pleasing to those, in the present day, who contribute with all their zeal, to the support of those divisions, than these arguments of Jesus were to the lawyer to whom he spake, or to the priests and Levites whom he reprov'd, and who were zealous to enrage their disciples against the Samaritans.

In order to modify this parable, so as to have it correspond with that religion which is dictated by the wisdom of this world, it would be necessary to introduce a number of important alterations, such as the following:

1. A certain learned divine, being a doctor of the law, as he journey'd that way, came within call of the half dead, wounded man, and stood still; and lifting

up his voice like a trumpet, told him that he felt great compassion for him, that he could not bear to leave him in that pitiful and forlorn condition to perish. He goes on and proposes that if he will rise from the ground where he lies wallowing in his blood, and stand upright as a man ought to stand, and walk to him without stumbling or fainting, he will grant him all needed assistance. The poor wretch now exerts the little strength, which remains in his broken limbs, but is immediately told by this *merciful friend*, that every struggle he makes renders his state still worse!

2. The reverend father draws still nigher with a view to examine, more closely, the miserable object before him. On coming near, he asks him concerning his creed. Do you believe that it would be perfectly just and right for me to go off and leave you here to die? Do you feel perfectly willing to lie here while life remains? Should you love me as well if I should break all your bones which the thieves have not broken, and leave you to perish, as you should if I should bind up your wounds and restore you to soundness? And he tells him that he must answer all these questions in the affirmative, or there is no mercy for him. The poor dying man looks confused!

3. This *faithful* minister of *comfort* proceeds to lay before this object of pity some more important subjects; and to inform him that there are a great multitude of persons in the same situation with himself, and that it is necessary for him to believe, that he is determined to let the greatest part of them die in that condition, which, if he does not believe, he cannot be saved himself! The wretch forlorn looks wild with amazement!

4. Faithful to his profession, this *lover* of unfortunate sufferers goes on with great zeal to inform this perishing man that in order that a few of the many who are in his situation should be relieved and enjoy his favor, it is necessary that the greatest part of them should perish in the most awful manner; and that as a condition of his deliverance, he must possess true benevolence, and be willing to be one of the many who are not delivered, so that his dreadful sufferings may redound to the glory of the deliverer of the few, and to their greater happiness! The sufferer begins to draw a comparison between this *professed friend*, and the *thieves* who had wounded and robbed him, and is rather puzzled to find an important difference!

5. With a view to leave nothing undone which can be done to save this miserable object of charity, this minister of *truth* is determined to clear his garments of his blood; which to do, he proceeds with an affectionate exhortation, in which he sets forth the dangerous situation which all are in, who, like him, have fallen among thieves. He sets forth in the most glowing colors, the dreadful torments to which he is exposed, unless he complies with the conditions which have been proposed; which conditions, he urges, are perfectly reasonable, and all within his power, and if he perishes, it is his own fault entirely. And he further says, that all who do perish, might be saved if they would, that it is their own will alone which prevents! This exhortation produces either delirium or despair!

The difference between the conduct of this orthodox minister, and the conduct of the goodly Samaritan in the parable, discovers the difference between the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of God; between the tender mercies of the wicked, which are

cruelty, and the mercy of the Lord, which endureth forever.

As has been suggested, the instruction, communicated in this parable, is as well calculated, if wisely improved, to destroy the hurtful enmity, now existing between the different denominations of the Christian church, as it was to destroy that which existed between the Jews and the Samaritans. This would be making a very profitable use of the parable; and it must be considered a lamentable dereliction of the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, in the clergy of the present day, that they strive to alienate their followers from one another of different denominations.

Without applying this general subject to the use for which it was evidently intended, in a primary sense, the parable contains the most perfect example of true charity, and is one of the most beautiful pictures of moral virtue that can be found in all the writings of the moralist.

This Jew was an enemy to the Samaritan by education. When the Samaritan finds him in his deplorable misery, he does not stop to reproach him of any unworthiness, does not inquire the business which brought him there, nor the means by which he was disabled from helping himself; but, immediately proceeds to acts of compassion and mercy, binds up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and makes provision for the future, at his own expense.

PARABLE XXX.

‘I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his *importunity* he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.’—Luke xi. 8.

WE find a similar passage to the above in chapter xviii, ver. 5: ‘Yet, because this woman troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ These passages were both introduced for the same purpose, viz. to show the necessity of prayer, in which we ought to be exercised without fainting, or doubting. The reader will turn to those scriptures, and read them with their connexions, and undoubtedly, evidence may appear in support of the following notes:

1. Prayer is the channel through which God communicates spiritual blessings to the soul; as it is necessary for us to feel our wants, in order to enjoy those blessings which are calculated to remove them.

2. When we pray, we ought to entertain the strongest conviction that the favors needed will be granted; for, if a man who was comfortably in bed with his children, would not arise and wait on his neighbor, merely because he was his friend, yet would, because of *importunity*; certainly, our heavenly Father, who is the author of all our rational wants, and the giver of the spirit of prayer, will grant his divine

blessings to his wanting, praying children. And if a judge, who feared not God nor regarded man, would avenge a widow of her adversaries, because of her continual requests, how much more may it be expected that God will avenge his *chosen*, whom he hath called by the word of his grace, for the great purpose of bearing witness to the world of the things of his kingdom.

ILLUSTRATION.

The methods used, by our Saviour, to communicate the doctrine of truth, appear to be designed to give the most favorable ideas of the divine character; nor does it seem, by the similitudes which he used, that he was apprehensive his hearers might entertain too high an opinion of the goodness of God. But on the contrary, he chose out of the wide field of the human passions, with which he was perfectly acquainted, those which breathe the greatest tenderness, and are the most active in deeds of mercy, as similitudes by which to commend the goodness of God to mankind; taking care always, to arrange his discourse so as to indicate that the tenderest of human affections were every way inferior to the divine goodness.

In connexion with our parable, Jesus appealed to the tender affections of those who were fathers, for an illustration of his doctrine. The divine truth with which he was endeavoring to make them acquainted, was, that our heavenly Father would not fail to bestow his favors on those who should call upon him. See the subject continued from the 8th to the 13th verse, inclusive: 'And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall

be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?' This important address to the fatherly affections, places the doctrine of Jesus at an infinite elevation above that unmerciful doctrine which dispossesses the parent of all his better feelings towards his offspring, and gives him a heart to rejoice in the endless torment of a once beloved son! But the particular cast of the parable under consideration, varies much from the above queries in regard to the parental love; for in the parable, even *friendship* is excluded; and the conclusion then is, that rather than to be importuned incessantly, he would rise and give as much as was needed. With this argument of the Saviour, let us compare the current opinion that our heavenly Father will remain forever deaf to the cries of souls in never ending anguish. It seems that the Saviour designed to dispose his subject so as to compare the *least* with the *greatest*. He does not suppose, therefore, any relation by blood, such as father, brother, or son; nor does he allow even friendship to have any thing to do in granting the assistance wanted; but very justly supposes that *importunity* alone would prevail. On the other hand, stands exhibited the divine relation in which our heavenly Father constituted man to himself; he is acknowledged to be, not only a friend, but a father; and the petitioners stand in the character of

sons. The just conclusion is, therefore, if success attended importunity in the first instance, no doubt could be reasonably entertained in the last.

As has been noticed, the Saviour, in continuing this argument, made use of this divine relation, and the confidence which might be built upon it; which he illustrated by the fatherly affections of his hearers.

Such arguments must be acknowledged to be divinely beautiful, if the fact established by them be true; but if not true, why should the Saviour use arguments to establish it?

One particular in the current doctrine of the present day, is, that our heavenly Father, from all eternity, predestinated millions of his rational offspring to endure endless misery and despair. Now compare this opinion, in which our learned doctors are established, with the arguments of the Saviour above quoted. 'I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' That is, I am authorised, and it is my business, pursuant to authority vested in me, to tell you for certainty, that if you ask, you shall receive. Let us suppose, what we have no scripture to prove, that Jesus taught, that his Father had predestinated the greatest part of mankind to endure endless misery; and then suppose that one of his disciples should have asked him the following question: Rabbi, thou hast been very particular in assuring us that the greatest part of mankind are already doomed to suffer eternally, and thou wilt not allow that any man can be thy disciple unless he believe this *fundamental article of faith*; if, then, the greatest part of mankind, or even all of them, should ask, seek, and knock, would the

greatest part, or even all, receive mercy, find favor and be admitted? How could this question receive a fair, unevasive answer, consistently with the above text, and with the foregoing suppositions?

It may be proper to notice another very common method made use of to exclude mankind, in general, from the divine favor, which is by supposing that but a small part of mankind will ever ask, seek, or knock, and that the greater part will fail, finally, of obtaining the divine favor, for this their needless neglect. This argument must be considered extremely defective in the following particulars.

1. The proposition, on which this argument is built, has no foundation but in mere conjecture; there being no scripture authority for its support.

2. The argument supposes that our heavenly Father feels so little interest in our coming to him, in our seeking after him, &c., that it is a matter for which he will not provide means, adequate to its accomplishment.

That divine revelation teaches differently may be seen by the following: See Jeremiah xxix, 10—14: 'For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring

you again into the place, whence I caused you to be carried away captive.' See chap. xxiv, 6, 7: 'For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' See Acts xv, 16, 17, 18: 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.' In the first passage quoted from Jeremiah, God promises what the people shall do, as well as what he himself will do: and in the second passage, God says he will give them an heart to know him; so that the whole depends on him who makes the promise, and who has the power to perform it. In short, it is hard to account for the belief of a sentiment which places the whole scheme of the gospel at the disposal of that very enmity of the sinner's heart, which it was designed, by our merciful Father in heaven to overcome and destroy. If it be granted that our Father in heaven has manifested his will, in the salvation of all men, and their coming unto the knowledge of the truth, as St. Paul testifies to Timothy; with what propriety can we suppose that this will of God, supported with all the means of grace in the hands of a mediator, to whom is committed all power in heaven and in earth, will finally be frustrated by the will of wicked

men? This would undoubtedly be the case, if the old serpent called the devil, had the power to have it so! On no other ground can it be expected. To show this matter in its natural light, let us ask, whether any of the human race would be saved from sin and death, if this old serpent had the power to prevent it? Answer, no. On the other hand, will any of the human race remain eternally in a state of sin and death, if the blessed mediator have power to prevent it? Answer, no; for how can there be an agreement between the seed of the woman and the serpent?

The prophet Zephaniah has a most beautiful passage, which shows the end of the ministration of wrath, and the glory that will follow. See chap. iii, 8, 9: 'Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.'

PARABLE XXXI.

'He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also,

till I shall dig about it, and dung it : and if it bear fruit, well : and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'—Luke xiii, 6, 7, 8, 9.

THIS parable was spoken in reply to those who told Jesus of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus taking into consideration, also, the eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, asked them if they thought these were sinners above all the Galileans and the dwellers in Jerusalem ; which question he answers himself, saying : ' I say unto you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Then he introduces the above parable, by which, he points at the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews.

1. By a fig-tree, is meant the house of Israel, which the Lord planted in the goodly land of promise.

2. The barrenness of the house of Israel, in respect to the fruits of righteousness, is signified by the fruitlessness of the fig-tree.

3. That, judging the Jews only by their barrenness, it was then time they were cut down or destroyed, as cumberers of the holy land ; but Christ, who was the dresser of the vineyard, seems to represent a short time in which he should grant them great advantages, which, after they had neglected, they would be destroyed.

ILLUSTRATION.

The house of Israel, as represented by this unfruitful fig-tree, is a just representation of all those national churches, who punctually attend to the outward forms of religion and neglect to bring forth the fruits of the

gospel. Nor need we confine this application to national churches, as it is very evident that many churches in Christendom who are not of that establishment, have, and pride themselves in having, a similarity of character with natural churches. Another striking figure by which such churches are represented, we find in St. Matt. xxi, 18, 19: 'Now in the morning, as he returned into the city he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.' This fig-tree resembled the then present Jewish church, as well as all churches of a similar character. This tree is not represented to have been wanting in size, in age, in height, or verdure, but in fruit only. All this might be said of those churches of which we speak. They frequently appear in a flourishing condition, they may grow to be numerous, and to adorn themselves with a great many worldly excellences, honors and dignities; all of which serve to beautify them, not in the sight of God, but in the sight of men, who have the vanity to pride themselves in such appearances. When religion becomes the creature of state government, and is shaped according to the pattern of tyrannical and oppressive power, it is always the object of that order of clergy who look to the public ruler for temporal support, to bend every thing, as much as possible, to please the vain, ostentatious and even ambitious views of such a patron. In such a case, what may reasonably be expected, but to have the character of the Saviour exhibited and illustrated by that of the oppressor, the tyrant, the unmerciful ruler?

From the fatal moment the civil power of Rome di-

rected its distempered policy to water the christian church, it is true it flourished greatly ; its branches became numerous and extensive ; it clothed itself with the *leafy honors* which had adorned the pagan worship ; but it decreased in respect to the genuine fruits of the gospel, in the same ratio, until it became as destitute of fruit as the fig-tree was, which we have taken for an emblem. In churches not constituted by civil authority, the spirit of dominion and oppression clothes itself with an ecclesiastical government, and gratifies the pride and vanity of its votaries with the privileges of imposing creeds, forms of worship, and modes of discipline, on the ignorance and superstition of stupid minds. If such a church succeed in its influence, to control colleges and other seminaries of learning, as is the case in this country, the clergy, in possession of such means, will not fail to use them to extend their *fig-tree*, and to adorn it with *showy leaves*, and pride themselves in its verdure. But as to the fruits of the gospel, we are not to find them on *such* trees. As the spirit of dominion, tyranny and ambition was never satisfied, so we find every order of clergy, throughout the world, who partake of this spirit, ever striving to the utmost stretch of their influence, to marry their darling church to the government of state, and to found it on this *rock*, against which, they trust, the gates of hell cannot prevail. If disappointed in this favorite object, then we hear the cry of the clergy, against the rulers, whom they represent as being destitute of all religion themselves, and as being disposed to prostrate its beautiful fabric, and to deprive it of its blessed influence in the world. All such churches must meet the fate of the fig-tree ; they must wither away, they must lose their verdure

their deciduous leaves will fall, and their candlestick must be removed.

It would undoubtedly be an unjustifiable omission not to apply this subject to individuals; for, in general, admonitions which are proper for nations, churches, or other communities, may be profitably applied to individuals. It is easily seen, that if no individual was disposed to adorn himself with those outside appearances of religion and piety, to the neglect of the real fruits of the spirit, there could be found no large bodies of people, such as associations and churches, of this cast. Let each soul, then, look at home, examine with caution whether his religion be all outside show, open profession, fig-leaf righteousness, without the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. If in these fruits we abound, then may we say with propriety, 'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit.'

PARABLE XXXII.

* For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it; lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.'
—Luke xiv, 28—32.

IN these parables, Christ taught those who pretended to be his disciples, the indispensable requisitions in

their discipleship. To be a disciple of Christ, a man must do as nearly as possible as Christ did ; make rational calculations like him whom he calls his master, and endeavor to walk as he walked. Therefore, to give the right sense of the above parables, I first apply them to Christ, and then to the character of a disciple.

First, Christ is represented as follows :

1. By a man who undertook to build a tower. By a tower, I understand that building of which Christ himself is the chief corner stone.

2. By first setting down and counting the cost, to see if he had sufficient to finish, I understand, that Christ counted the great cost of the work which he undertook in the salvation of a world, and though it was immense, knew he was able to accomplish it.

2. That, having taken those precautions, he will not at last be *mocked* for undertaking more than he was able to accomplish.

4. The Saviour is represented by a *king* going to make war with another *king*, whom I understand to be the *father of lies*, or the *king of the bottomless pit*.

5. The Saviour, or Prince of Peace, consulteth whether he be able to meet his foe ; and though he had not the numbers in his service which his adversary commanded, he discovered, by divine wisdom, one only method of victory ; which was by laying down his life. Offering it in the high places of the field, he could effect the death of his adversary, and having power to take his life again, which his enemy had not, his victory would be worthy of the highest glory and honor, and eternally complete.

6. Under the consideration of these circumstances, we are not to suppose that our glorious Redeemer will ever sue for conditions of capitulation with the father of lies, nor ask for an armistice until the man of sin is destroyed by the *breath* of divine truth, and consumed by the brightness of the coming of him, who cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength; who speaketh in righteousness, and is mighty to save.

Secondly. In applying the parables to show the requisitions in the character of a disciple of Christ I observe:

1. As Christ had before told the people, that unless a man should take up his *cross*, and bear it, and follow him, he could not be his disciple; so he shows, in the parable, that unless they calculated on as high an *expense* as the loss of their lives, they could not be his disciples, as he had calculated that *expense* for himself.

2. That if they expected to be builders in the christian temple, they must not only dig deep and lay their foundation upon a rock, but must look for sufficiency for accomplishing their labor from the grace of the great Redeemer.

3. That a profession of christianity, without those calculations, would tend to their own shame, and a dishonor of the cause which they professed to espouse.

4. That if they could not calculate on a victory over the adversary, by way of the cross, but undertook the contest under any other consideration, they were not so wise as a king who would send an embassage to his foe, and sue for conditions of peace, knowing that he was not able to contend with double numbers.

ILLUSTRATION.

That Christ's ransomed church is represented by a building, may be shown by the following scriptures : 1 Cor. iii, 9, 'Ye are God's building.' 16, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?' 2 Cor. vi, 16: 'And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' Eph. ii, 19—22: 'Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.'

The rearing of this mystical temple of God, suggests the following subjects of discussion :

1. The materials of which this building is composed :

2. The situation from which these materials are taken, and their preparation for this temple ; and,

3. The skill, and operative power of the builder to complete the work.

1. The materials of which this building is composed, are mankind under the denominations of the Jew and the Gentile world. This idea is found in the in-

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roduction of the above quotation from Ephesians ; see verse 11, and onward : ' Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands ; and that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world ; but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace ; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby ; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.'

Here we see that the apostle represents the Jews under the denomination of the circumcision, and the Gentiles under that of the uncircumcision. These, he argues, are made one by him who is our peace ; and by observing the connexion of the argument, we find that these two, made one, are the materials of which the before mentioned temple of God is composed.

2. The situation from which these materials are taken, and their preparation for this temple, we also learn from the arguments in the above quotation. The situation of the Gentiles is represented as follows : ' Without Christ, being aliens from the common-

wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' This was the situation of the Gentiles. The Jews are represented as being only circumcised in the flesh, with hands; which the same apostle tells us availeth nothing in Christ. The method by which these materials are prepared for this temple, is expressed in the following words: 'And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.' Reconciliation to God is the preparation necessary. How was this reconciliation effected? Was it by any thing wrought by these unreconciled people? No. The apostle says that Christ did this by the cross. How was the enmity destroyed? By the cross. What was the consequence? Peace was preached to them who were afar off, and to them who were nigh. The universality of this reconciliation, the apostle mentions in a number of passages, particularly, Col. i, 19, 20: 'For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.'

It being evident that the plan of reconciliation to God, embraces the whole human family, it may be well,

3. To inquire whether this reconciler has sufficient skill and power to effect so great a work. See Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6: 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Here the apostle produces instances,

in which God, for the great love which he has for those who are dead in sins, quickened them in Christ. See also Phil. iii, 21: 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' Here the ability is fully expressed. 1 Cor. xv, 53, 54: 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.'

If it be acknowledged that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge dwell in Christ, it must be acknowledged likewise that he wants no *skill* to accomplish his undertaking; and if it be granted that all power in heaven and in earth is committed to Christ, it must also be granted that he has *sufficient power* to accomplish his design in reconciling all things to himself. Zech. iv, 9: 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.' Verse 7: 'And he shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.'

The process of the Saviour under the similitude of a king going to make war against another, furnishes the following subject for discussion:

1. The power against which this war is prosecuted;
2. The object to be obtained by victory in favor of Christ; And 3. The sufficiency of power to overcome on the part of the Prince of Peace.

1. The Scriptures give the following account of the power against which this holy war is to be prosecuted.

Gen. iii, 1 : ' Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.' 2. Cor. xi, 3 : ' But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' St. John viii, 4 : ' Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do : he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it.' 1 John iii, 8 : ' He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.' James iii, 14, 15, 16 : ' But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.'

The Scriptures which speak of the power of Christ to oppose and overcome this adversary, and the object to be obtained by this victory, will be found to be the same, generally. See Gen. iii, 15 : ' And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' Heb. ii, 14, 15 : ' Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.' 1 John iii, 8 ; ' For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' Col. i, 13 : ' Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

By the foregoing quotations, which are but a few of the many scriptures which read to the same effect, the following facts are evident :

1. That it was the design of the Saviour's mission to destroy the devil, and all sin, the works of the devil. And,

2. To deliver mankind from the power of darkness, which is the power of the devil, or falsehood, into the kingdom of light, truth and righteousness. These two propositions are as evidently supported by the above quotations, as the facts are, that there is or ever was that power which is represented in the Scriptures under the name of *serpent, father of lies, darkness, devil, or satan* ; or such a power as is represented by the name of *Seed of the woman, Son of God, Mediator, Saviour, Captain of Salvation, High Priest, Light of the world, Lamb of God, Covenant of the people, and Lord of all.*

From these facts it is reasonable to argue, that all the doctrine, which has ever been preached in Christendom, which teaches the endless continuance of the devil and his kingdom, and the endless continuance of man's captivity under the power of darkness, is in direct opposition to the declared objects of the holy wars instituted and carried on against the powers of darkness, by the prince of light.

St. Paul has many luminous passages on the subject of universal submission to the power of Christ ; one of which we will here notice. See Phil. ii, 9, 10, 11 : ' Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Je-

sus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' Who can close their eyes so as not to see that universal submission and allegiance to the kingdom of the exalted Saviour, to the glory of God the Father, is the manifest sense of this passage? Why does the glory of God the Father, require this universal submission and allegiance to Christ? See the answer in Psalm ii, 8th verse: 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' When a king, or monarch, gives provinces, or territories, or countries, to his son for his inheritance, the honor of his crown guarantees the allegiance of those possessions to the prince. Accordingly the prophet says, Psalm cx, 1, 2, 3: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' Here we see the father enter the country which he has given to his son, saying to him, Sit thou at my right hand, as a token to the people that I have given the government of these territories into thy hands. I have given this people to thee for an inheritance; they were my subjects, thou art my lawful heir, and this is the inheritance which I have given thee. And it is the rod of thy strength, which I will now cause to come forth from the covenant, in which this country is insured to thee, by which thou shalt rule in the midst of these thy present enemies, who have said, we will not have this man to rule over us; and when this rod of thy strength, which is all power in heaven and in earth, is displayed in the administration of thy government, thy people, whom I have given thee, shall be a willing

people. How divinely glorious must it be to God the Father, to have every knee bow to Christ, and every tongue confess him to be Lord! And how shamefully dishonoring it is for the spiritual warriors who have enlisted under the banner of the Prince of Peace, and have received bounty for their encouragement, to oppose the universal extension of his power, and the universal submission of his possessions to his government! See the beautiful account which is given of this Captain of our salvation in Isaiah xlii, 1—8: ‘Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein; I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.’ In this spiritual warfare the apostles of the Lamb were engaged, whose weapons were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and

every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. As they were assured that the Captain of their salvation would never be discouraged, so they did not faint, nor grow weak in their minds, but fought a good fight, kept the faith, finished their course, and received their crowns.

PARABLES XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV.

* And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep, if ye lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ? and, when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And, when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.*—*Luke xv, 3—7.*

THIS chapter contains three parables ; and though they were spoken on the same occasion, and to the same effect, they contain a great variety of beautiful and instructive similitudes. The reader will easily discover the occasion of Christ's speaking those parables to the scribes and Pharisees, by observing the first and second verses of this chapter, which read thus : ' Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.' Here we have the objection which the Pharisees stated against Christ, which was, that he

received sinners. And as an answer to this objection, the three parables which we find in this chapter were spoken ; and they contain so rational a vindication of the propriety of the thing for which he was accused, that I entertain no doubt but that those Pharisees and scribes felt the force of his arguments, and were ashamed of their own weakness, and the impropriety of their allegation. And I greatly wonder, that Pharisees of the present day, who fancy themselves *righteous* and others *wicked*, are so lost, as not to feel reproved when they read those words of Christ.

In order to give the ideas contained in the first parable, I observe,

1. Christ takes his adversaries on their own ground, admitting in the argument, that the idea which they entertained of their own goodness, and the opinion they had of the wickedness of those whom they called sinners, were just, and well founded : in which method, as we have before noted, he replied to Simon the Pharisee on a like occasion. I understand, therefore, that the ninety and nine sheep which went not astray, represented the Pharisees and scribes ; and the *one* that did, signified the publicans and sinners.

2. The impropriety of their objection may be shown by stating the following question : If you have so much care of your property in carnal substance, as to go in search of *one* sheep that goes astray out of an *hundred*, why do you condemn me for seeking the recovery of so *many* of mine whom you acknowledge have gone astray ? The reader will also see the propriety of adding to the weight of the question the consideration, that the property, which Christ holds in sinners, stands in the parable, as things *eternal*, to the fading things of time.

3. The faithfulness of the Saviour of sinners, in seeking and saving that which was lost, is shown by the shepherd going after the sheep 'until he finds it.' It may be well to note, that there is no representation of the shepherd calling the sheep, and leaving it to its own will whether it would return to the fold, or not; nor of his seeking till he was weary, without success; but, he goeth after it until he *find* it. O, my soul, had thy shepherd been less faithful, thy wanderings had never been reclaimed.

4. What the Saviour does for sinners, is farther shown, in that the shepherd does neither *lead*, nor *drive* his sheep, but taketh and layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; not trusting the emaciated wanderer to its own strength. The reader will remember, that the government is upon the shoulders of Christ, and that his name is called Wonderful.

5. What is meant by friend and neighbors being called together to rejoice because the lost was found, is shown in the application which Christ himself made; see verse 7: 'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over *one sinner* that *repenteth*, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.' On this application, I make the following remarks:

1. It is evident that there is joy in heaven in consequence of the salvation of sinners; which gives us the favorable opinion that *charity* is an inhabitant of heaven, as well as of earth; and that when souls get there through the *blood* of the *cross*, they draw divine consolations when they know the work of the Redeemer is going on below, in the recovery of those who are yet in sin.

2. If the salvation of *one sinner* causes joy in heaven, the *recovery* of the *thousands* who crowded

to hear the gracious words which proceeded from the lips of him who spoke, as never man spoke, could by no means have a contrary effect, but would be of still greater consequence to the joys of the happy.

3. I infer, if the salvation of *one* sinner causes joy in heaven, and if the salvation of *many* increase that joy in proportion to the number saved, the entire *loss* of *one*, must, of necessity, cause as much sorrow, as the salvation of one, does joy; and the loss of many would increase that sorrow in a ratio of the number.

4. As Christ gave the joys of heaven as a sufficient reason for his having mercy on sinners, I am happy in believing that he possesses as strong a desire to save sinners, as he does to increase the joys of the blessed; and that until he is careless of the latter, he will not be of the former.

Some of the reasons why those in heaven should rejoice at the return of the wandering sinner, are,

1. As their whole souls are swallowed up in the love of God, they rejoice that others are brought to love so divine an object.

2. As they love to sing the praises of the crucified, they rejoice to have others engaged in the heavenly devotion, *justly due* to *him* who led *captivity captive*.

3. In the same proportion as they love God and the Redeemer, they hate and abhor every principle of wickedness in sinful man, and therefore rejoice at the destruction of sin.

4. As the noblest principle possessed by the glorified, is *charity*, they rejoice in the salvation of others, as they do in their own felicity.

· 'Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? and when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.'—Luke xv. 8, 9.

In this second parable, we find similar ideas to those in the former.

1. The Pharisees and scribes are represented by nine pieces of silver which were not lost; and the publicans and sinners by *one* that was.

2. The intent of this parable is discovered by stating a question, as in notes on the former parable, thus: If a woman could be justified for lighting a candle, sweeping her house, and seeking diligently for *one* piece of silver, which was lost out of ten, until she found it; would it not be justifiable for Christ to come, a *light* into the world, to seek and to save the *vast multitudes* who were lost in sin and death?

3. The property which Christ holds in the lost sinner, I learn thus: that *piece of money* which was *lost*, belonged to the woman who lost it; and it was no less her property when it was lost, than before. Again, it was as *real silver* even in its *lost state*, as when it was with the other nine; and its continuing to retain its real value, was all that rendered it an object of recovery.

The faithfulness of the Saviour in the recovery of the sinner is signified by the woman seeking *until* she found the piece that was lost; the same as the shepherd going after the sheep until he found it.

5. What is meant by calling friends and neighbors together, to rejoice that the lost was found, is signified in the application, as in the former parable.

‘ And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And, not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. And, when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came, and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found.’— Luke xv. 11—32.

This third parable affords the following notes:

1. The Pharisees and scribes are signified by the elder son.
2. The publicans and sinners, by the younger.
3. The righteousness of which those Pharisees boasted, is represented by the alleged industry and faithfulness of the elder son.

4. The sinfulness which those Pharisees could see in those whom they called sinners above themselves, is represented by the prodigality of the younger son.

5. The meanness and unholiness of the service of sin, is signified by the prodigal's *feeding swine*: an animal, by the law of Moses pronounced unclean.

6. The endeavors of the wicked to satisfy the hunger of the immortal soul with *fruits* of the *flesh* or *carnal mind*, is shown by the prodigal wishing to fill his belly with the *husks* which the swine ate.

7. That sin is a land of famine, in which the soul can never enjoy the bread of life, is signified by the famine which arose in the country where the prodigal had wandered, by which he was reduced to want, and came to himself.

8. The riches of the Father of mercies, is signified by the father having many hired servants, who all had bread enough, and to spare.

9. The effect produced by the famine which the soul experiences in sin and wickedness, is denoted by the prodigal coming to a determination to go home to his father, to which determination he was compelled by the gnawings of hunger.

10. The unworthiness felt by a *repenting* sinner, who is conscious to himself of having sinned against heaven, and in the sight of God; and awfully feels the loss of sonship, and a willingness to become a *door-keeper* in the house of God, if so be he might obtain the favors enjoyed by servants, who eat bread in their master's house, is intended by the confession and request made by the prodigal to his father.

11. The fatherly kindness and loving mercy of God towards sinners, is shown by the father running to

meet his son while yet a great way off, falling on his neck, fondly embracing and compassionately kissing his long lost child.

12. The abundant favors, privileges and mercies conferred by divine grace, on a reclaimed profligate, beyond all the requests made by the subject, is intended by the best robe, a ring, shoes, the preparation of a fatted calf, and the ordination of merriment and festivity: all which were favors more than were asked for. Instead of being reproved for spending what he had already received, he was bid welcome to more; in room of being admitted to *labor* for bread, in the character of a servant, he is introduced into his father's house as a favorite child, with a ring on his hand, a token of the father's love, and an indication that he *labored* not. The best robe, represents the righteousness of Christ; and shoes, being 'shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

13. The Pharisees laboring in the law, or legal righteousness, are meant by the elder son being in the field; and their then present murmurs at Christ for receiving sinners, and their rejecting Christ therefore, is meant by the elder son being angry, and refusing to go into his father's house because the father had received the prodigal so kindly, with such marks of affection and tokens of honor. Had Christ come with a gospel to save the righteous and condemn the wicked, so long as the Pharisees could have retained their then present opinion of themselves and others, they might have gratified their spiritual pride in hailing him welcome, and zealously professing to be his disciples. But as he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, those who were whole, in their own opinion, saw not their need of a physician, and, therefore, rejected him.

14. The exceeding joys possessed by the gospe. convert above all those enjoyed under the covenant of works, stands, in the representation, as the partaking of a fatted calf, with joys and festivity, in a father's house, to many days of hard labor, without so much as a kid, to make merry with friends. O, the barrenness of self-righteousness! like a fig-tree on which much labor is bestowed, but which withers without fruit.

15. That the blessings of everlasting life in the new covenant, did, in reality, belong to those murmuring Pharisees, as well as to those whom they called sinners, is shown by the father saying to the elder son, 'Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.'

And lastly, The propriety of rejoicing on the return and acceptance of the sinner, is shown by the words of the text: 'It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.'

But observe, dear reader, had those murmuring Pharisees and scribes been sensible of the abomination of their own wicked hearts, and the sinfulness of their real characters, they would have considered themselves as wicked as they viewed others, and felt themselves as lost sheep that stood in need of the care of the shepherd; like a piece of silver in a lost condition, never to be recovered but by the diligence of the owner; or like a prodigal son, who had idly spent his time, and his property wickedly; and they would willingly have confessed their unworthiness to be admitted as sons into the kingdom of God.

ILLUSTRATION.

As the three parables in Matthew xxv, had their general application to the same subject, so these three parables in Luke xv, were evidently spoken, by Christ, to illustrate the one subject to which the notes apply them. For this reason they may be justly connected in this illustration.

As it is humbly conceived that the notes give the particulars of these parables, in a manner too plain not to be understood, the following illustration will consist of arguments founded on the following truths exhibited in these parables :

1. Mankind, though in a state of alienation from God, in a state of sin and rebellion, are represented as the property of God, and by him so highly estimated as to induce him to recover us from alienation and sin.

2. In all the above condition, God acknowledges man to be his offspring, and exercises over him a fatherly providence, and towards him all the fatherly affections and mercies. And,

3. The true spirit of heavenly charity rejoices with an increased delight and satisfaction in the bringing of sinners to repentance.

The first of these general propositions is fully supported by the most natural sense of the two first parables. The lost, or strayed sheep, was the property of him who owned the ninety and nine which went not astray. This sheep, by going from the fold, did neither alienate the property of itself from the owner, nor change its nature to any other species of animal, for

had either of these events been the consequence of the sheep going astray, it might render it improper for him who had been the owner to go after it. If the sheep when astray were not the property of him to whom it belonged before it went astray, why should he seek it? If he found it, he could not say, as in the parable, 'I have found *my sheep* which was lost.' Or if the sheep had changed its species, it might have become an animal of no value to the former owner. It is true that the sheep, by straying from the fold to which it belonged, might, by degrees, lose its familiar acquaintance with the shepherd, and contract habits of wildness by which it might endeavor to elude the shepherd, whose voice now becomes its terror. This was, in some sort, the case with man: see Gen. iii, 9, 10: 'And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.' This *fear* was not the offspring of correct ideas, but of that deception which sin had wrought in his mind.

In a similar manner we may reason on the subject of the piece of silver. When it was lost it was still silver, and it was the property of her who owned the other nine. It is true, this piece of silver may be considered as having been in such a condition that it might lose its brightness, contract filth, and to the eye of a superficial observer, be taken for something far less valuable than silver; though it might not be difficult for a more close inspector, or a chemist, to determine its properties and value.

The following are a few of the many scriptures which corroborate the foregoing statement: Jer. i, 6: '*My people* hath been *lost sheep*; their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them

away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.' ii, 13; 'For *my people* have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Verse 32: 'Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet *my people* have forgotten me, days without number.' Chap. iv, 22: 'For *my people is foolish*, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.' Chap. viii, 7: 'Yea the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but *my people* know not the judgment of the Lord.' Isaiah xix, 24, 25: 'In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be *Egypt my people and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.*' The foregoing quotations are sufficient to show that God owns the wicked, the alienated wandering sons of men, to be *his people*. The following show that our Lord or owner values us so highly, that he has manifested his determination to reclaim us from sin. Matt. xviii, 11: 'For the son of man is come to save that which was lost.' Luke xix, 10: 'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' St. John iii, 17: 'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.' Chap. x, 11: 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' Verse 16: 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them

also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' Matt. i, 21: 'And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus*; for he shall save his people from their sins.' Here it is necessary to show that the divine purpose in saving mankind from sin, is manifested as an effect proceeding from the *love of God towards sinful man*. St. John iii, 16: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Rom. iii, 8: 'But God commandeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' 1 John iv, 9, 10: 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Eph. ii, 4, 5: 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace are ye saved.)' Rev. i, 5: 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' As it is conceived that ample proof has been adduced to support our first general proposition, viz. Mankind, though in a state of alienation from God, in a state of sin and rebellion, is represented as the property of God, and by him so highly estimated, as to induce him to recover us from alienation and sin, we may proceed as proposed, to consider,

2. That in all the above condition, God acknowledges man to be his offspring, and exercises over him a fatherly providence, and towards him all the father-

fatherly affections and mercies. This proposition is well supported by the last of these parables. The son who left his father's house, and went into a far country, was no less a *son* than he who stayed at home; and though he spent his substance in an unjustifiable prodigality, yet he was still a *son*; notwithstanding he was reduced to penury and want, yet he was a *son*; although he perished with hunger, while hired servants, in his father's house, had bread enough and to spare, yet he was not the less for this a *son*; though he had sinned against heaven, and in the sight of his father, and judging him, by his conduct, was no more worthy to be called his son, yet the father says, '*This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.*'

The fatherly providence, exercised over the prodigal son, is seen in the indulgence, in the first instance, which he obtained in being permitted to go from home; and afterwards being subjected to an imperious necessity of returning to his father, in a most penitent manner. The famine which arose in the land where the prodigal was, must be attributed to that providence whose eye was ever watchful for the good of this wanderer, whose return to his father depended on his wants not otherwise to be satisfied.

Such was the manner in which a divine providence brought about and completely fulfilled the visions of Joseph which portended the humble state into which his brethren should be brought, before him their protector. Neither Joseph nor his brethren were the cause of the famine which induced those sons of Jacob to go down to Egypt; but it was sent by that divine providence which embraced, as an object, from which it could not be diverted, the humility of Joseph's brethren.

It was this famine which caused Judah to say unto his father, 'Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.' It was this famine which reduced Jacob to consent that his beloved Benjamin should go from him, saying, 'If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.'

The fatherly affections and mercies, exercised towards the offspring of God, are represented by the reception with which the returning prodigal was blessed of his father.

In room of being indifferent concerning the return of his son, the father's eye, ever watchful, spies him, while yet a great way off. Then did melting compassion move the father, and he ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Now, as tokens of the father's love, are brought the best robe, a ring and shoes; and the destitute child is clothed in the most decent manner; the fatted calf is killed by the father's order, and every expression of joy, suitable to the occasion, welcomes the long lost son to the mansions of plenty and peace.

That the Scriptures abundantly support the idea that God acknowledges *sinner*s to be his *children*, the following passages fully show: Isaiah i, 2, 3, 4: 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up *children*, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, *my people* doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, *children* that are corrupters! they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One

of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.' Deut. xxxii, 6: 'Do ye thus requite the Lord? O foolish people and unwise! is not he thy *Father* that hath bought thee?' Mal. i, 6: 'A *son* honoreth his *father*, and a *servant* his *master*: if then I be a *father* where is mine *honor*? and if I be a *master*, where is my *fear*? saith the Lord of hosts unto you; O priests, that despise my name.' Chap. ii, 10: 'Have we not *all one father*? hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, every man against his *brother*, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?' Eph. iv, 6: 'One God and *Father* of *all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' Matt. vi, 9: 'After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our *Father* which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name.' Verse 12, 'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Heb. ii, 11—15: 'For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*; saying, I will declare thy name unto my *brethren*; in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the *children* which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the *children* are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'

No comments are necessary to make it evident that the most natural sense of such scriptures, as are here quoted, goes to prove the proposition under consideration. This being conceded, notice will be taken of our third proposition, which is, that the true spirit of

christian charity rejoices at the bringing of sinners to repentance.

This idea is not only supported by the application of the three parables here illustrated, but is in reality the *soul* of the gospel system. To bring sinners to repentance, was the manifest object of God sending his Son into our world; he was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to *give repentance and remissions of sins*; the ministry of the gospel is directed to this end, viz. that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This system of gospel salvation, is a system of divine benevolence, which is the spirit of heaven-born charity. Jesus says, Luke v, 32: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' This is the declared object of our blessed Saviour. For the success of this work, there is joy in heaven; the angels of God see, with infinite delight and satisfaction, the triumphs of the cross extended in the repentance of sinners. They see the kingdom of darkness diminished, the power of satan more circumscribed, the unhappy rebellion of mankind reclaimed, sin actually finished in the human heart, the strong holds of the enemy reduced by the power of divine grace, and every thought of the heart brought into obedience to Christ.

Nothing short of this can be meant by *repentance*; for to nothing short of this could the sense of the parables be justly applied. A lost sheep, found by the shepherd, restored to the fold from which it wandered, giving joy to the owner; the finding of a valuable piece of silver, and its restoration to the possession of its owner, causing joy to her who so highly prized the treasure; the coming home of a long absent prodigal son, in the most humble manner, to his father, being

received with such marks of favor, and treated so kindly, and the joy inspired by the occasion, all show, in the most lively colors, the true penitence of the sinner, his happy reception into the enjoyment of favor, and the devotedness of his heart to gospel obedience: while, as a consequence of this salvation, joys unspeakable abound in the heart of every true lover of God.

Contrast with this heavenly theme the soul chilling doctrine of eternal rebellion against the law of love, and set up and establish the kingdom of satan and his dominion over the offspring of God, then ask the lovers of the cross to rejoice in such doctrine, what heart could comply? To require a song of rejoicing in this case, would be like the tantalizing request to the captives mentioned in Psalm cxxxvii, 1—4: 'By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land.' Those who have led the church captive into Babylon have required of her songs, and those who have wasted her, have required of her mirth; but her harps have been hung on the willows of sorrow, and she has wept by the rivers of grief.

But Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come unto her with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Let us allow the objector, the liberty to oppose the *foregoing* arguments by stating as follows:

1. It is a dishonor to God to argue that sinners are his offspring.

2. To argue that God loves the sinner as his offspring, and exercises a fatherly providence over him, and all the fatherly affections and mercies towards him, is to encourage him in sin and rebellion against God. And

3. Such arguments serve the unjust cause of exalting the wicked in his own eyes.

These objections are constantly urged by those who stand in the character of the Pharisees and scribes, who are zealous to defend the character of their God against all such dishonor, and are equally zealous to set the wicked in a low diminutive sphere. But these *Pharisees* and *scribes* are blind and insensible to the following truths :

1. If it be not allowed that sinners are the offspring of God, it will be difficult to determine in what their sinfulness consists ; for they must be the offspring of God, or of some other being, or they must be self-existent. If they be the offspring of some other being than God, it must be proved that they have disobeyed this being in order to prove that they are sinners. If they be self-existent, they are not accountable to any being but themselves ; and while they do as they please, there is none to say, what doest thou ?

2. These blind guides, who suppose that it is an encouragement to the sinner to continue in sin, to argue and prove, from the word of God, that he has a father in heaven who owns him as his child, and exercises a fatherly providence over him, and all the fatherly affections and mercies towards him,—are insensible and blind to the fact, that they themselves are the wicked, and stand justly condemned for the omission of the

weightier matters of the law. They are also blind to that divine truth so plainly argued in the following scriptures: Rom. ii, 4: 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' 1 John iv, 16: 'We love him because he first loved us.'

3. Their prejudice so blinds them that they do not see that the argument, that the sinner is the acknowledged child of God, is so far from serving the unjust cause of exalting the wicked in his own eyes, that its effects in the mind, are exactly the reverse. Disobedience to a kind and merciful father is surely the greatest cause of self abasement, that can be imagined; while on the other hand, not to allow the sinner to be the acknowledged child of God, is to absolve him from this most humiliating ingratitude. Could these *Pharisees* and *scribes* but see the glorious truth of man's relation to his heavenly father, as that truth is revealed in Christ, and could they but realize the universal brotherhood of mankind, they would no more murmur because the Saviour receiveth sinners and eateth with them, they would no more be angry, because our heavenly Father receives the returning prodigal; nor would they refuse to join in the festive joys of the fatted calf, if they loved their brethren of the human race, as they do themselves.

PARABLES XXXVI, XXXVII, XXXVIII.

‘ And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord’s debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? and he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? and he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’
—Luke xvi, 1—14.

Our blessed Lord delivered the foregoing discourse to his disciples in hearing of the Pharisees, to whom he had been discoursing in the preceding chapter. And it appears evident that he intended to delineate the *real character* of the Pharisees and scribes, standing in the Jewish religion, as he had, for the sake of a query, granted them a more favorable character than they merited, in the former chapter. The reader will

do well to take into consideration the general thread of discourse, connecting the parables in the preceding chapter, and the succeeding parables in this, with the one under consideration, by which the following notes will appear just :

1. The great Lawgiver who descended upon Mount Sinai, and gave forth the tables of the first covenant from thence to Israel, is represented in the parable by a lord who had a steward.

2. The house of Israel, to whom the law was given, and all the oracles under the legal dispensation communicated, is meant by the steward.

3. The failure of the Jews in not keeping the law, is intended by the steward's wasting his lord's money; and the allegation which lay against them for making the *law void* by their traditions, is signified by the steward being *accused* to his lord.

4. The rejecting of the Jews, and the taking of the law from them, in respect to dispensation, is meant by the steward being turned out of his stewardship.

5. Christ shows that, in natural things, an unjust steward, who provided for himself, by bestowing his lord's property on his debtors, did more wisely than the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, whom he calls the children of light, did in things of God and religion : as they were about to be turned out of their stewardship, in respect to the law and ordinances thereof, and yet rejected their Messiah and his gospel, the only means of their future safety and enjoyment.

6. Christ represents the legal dispensation and the works thereof, by the mammon of unrighteousness ; showing that the ritual righteousness of the law stood in comparison with that of the gospel of everlasting life,

as things temporal, to things eternal. And under this representation, he exhorts the people to make unto themselves friends, by improving the law and its ordinances, so as to introduce themselves, as in the case of the virgins, to the everlasting habitation of the bridegroom.

7. If they were perverse enough to make *void* the law, by adopting traditions contrary thereto, (which is meant by their being unjust in that which was least, and unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, and in the things of another,) they would not be disposed to make any better use of the gospel and the privileges thereof: but would, in violation of its divine purity, substitute their own *mysterious traditions*, giving them the sanction of divine authority, and make the gospel a trade, as they had made the law, (as many people have done to whom the gospel has been preached) which is meant by their being *unjust in much*; which deprived them of the privilege of the *true riches* which were verily their own. This circumstance is very similar to that described in the parable of the one talent; where it is shown, that by the servant not improving that which was another's, he was deprived of any further privilege of that which was committed to his care, and failed of that promotion which he would have obtained had he been faithful.

8. Christ represents the *spirit* and *flesh*, by two masters, God and *mammon*; and tells them that they could not serve both; that is, while they professed to serve the law only in the letter, under an apprehension of justification thereby, they were not in the service of God; and the righteousness acquired thereby, would not be acceptable. Therefore the Pharisees, who 'heard all these things,' being full of spiritual pride

and covetousness, 'derided him.' But Christ replies, concerning their highly esteemed justification, and declared it to be abomination in the sight of God.

'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.'—Luke xvi, 18.

These words are here evidently used parabolically; by which the propriety of the preceding parable is shown, and the succeeding one introduced. In verses 16 and 17, Christ continuing his reply to the Pharisees, says, 'The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail.' It is evident that the general thread of discourse is continued, which has for its subject the putting away of the law, and the introduction of the gospel, and the consequences arising to the Jews on their rejecting the Saviour, agreeably to which the following notes are written.

1. As a man's putting away his wife and marrying another, was considered adultery; so to put away the law dispensation, and marry to the gospel, before the law was every tittle fulfilled, blending law and gospel, in point of dispensation, is considered spiritual adultery; an adultery of which, it is to be feared, multitudes of professed christians are guilty, by endeavoring to connect the law of works with the law of faith; and not being experimentally dead to the law by the body of Christ, they commit the above mentioned adultery by professing to be married to him who rose from the dead.

2. As it was counted adultery, for a man to put away his wife, and marry another; so for a man to marry a woman, who had been put away from her husband, was considered adultery. By which we learn that after the law was fulfilled, and, as a dispensation, put away, for the Jews still to marry to the law, would be spiritual adultery; an adultery of which the Jews are guilty even to this day.

I now come to the third and last parable in this chapter, by which the particular subject on which I have been writing, seems to be closed. In order for the reader to make no mistake in this parable, an attention must be paid to the adultery last described.

‘There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And, besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come unto this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’—Luke xvi, 19—31.

THE reader, by observing those precautions recommended in the introduction of the above parable, will see the propriety of the following notes:

1. The high priest, under the law, is represented by a rich man, whose clothing was purple and fine linen ; a garment which God commanded Moses to put upon Aaron, the first high priest. And as a portion of the sacrifices belonged to those who administered at the altar, his fare was every day sumptuous ; and his riches consisted in the righteousness of the law.

2. The Gentiles are signified by a beggar, who lay at the rich man's gate, full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's *table*, having respect to the *tables of stone*, on which the oracles of God were written. *Instructions* from those oracles, are represented by *crumbs* falling from a table ; which instructions the Gentiles enjoyed not, under that dispensation. And those ancient philosophers of the Gentiles, who endeavored to cure the moral infirmities of their disciples, and to lead them in the path of moral righteousness, are represented by dogs licking the sores of a beggar.

3. By the death of the beggar, I understand the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. Christ having closed the law dispensation, and introduced the gospel of salvation preached to Abraham by Jehovah himself, who said, ' In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' the Gentiles, being children and heirs of that promise, received ' the unsearchable riches of Christ ;' which caused them to die to all the life they before possessed. They died to all their *gods* and idolatrous worship, and were carried by the *apostles* of Jesus into Abraham's *faith* ; which is represented by *angels* carrying Lazarus into Abraham's *bosom*.

4. By the death of the rich man, I understand the close of that dispensation which gave him all the pre-

eminence which he enjoyed above the beggar under the law. And his not being alive to the gospel, being dead in the sin of the adultery before described, he was in a fit condition for burial, in which he differs from the beggar, as the death which Lazarus died did not admit of a burial. The high priest being shut up from the light of the gospel, in the legal ordinances, is signified by his being buried.

5. His lifting up his eyes in hell, being tormented in flames, represents a conviction of the condemning power of the law, and the ragings of that fire represented by the fire on Sinai at the giving of the law.

6. The rich man seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, is the fulfilment of the words of Christ to the Pharisees. 'Ye shall see them come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out:' by which was intended the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the rejection of the house of Israel.

7. That the rich man was a descendant from Abraham, and that he stood in need of the favors which Lazarus enjoyed, we learn by the rich man calling Abraham father, and praying that Lazarus might be sent to his relief; to which Abraham replies, (acknowledging him his son) 'Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented;' having allusion to their different circumstances, under different dispensations. Abraham observes further, that between him and the rich man, there was a great gulf fixed, so that those who would go from Abraham to the rich man, could not;

and those who would come from the rich man to Abraham, could not. By this gulf, I understand that divine purpose of God, communicated by Christ, who said, 'Henceforth, your *house* is left unto you desolate, and ye shall not see me until ye shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.' The same thing is meant in that text in Romans, which I have before quoted: 'I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness, in part, hath happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.' By these passages, we learn, that it was the purpose of infinite wisdom, that there should be a time, in which the Jews, who rejected the Saviour, should wander in darkness and desolation, and by no means whatever be brought to see the Saviour until that time be elapsed. By those who are in Abraham's bosom desiring to go to the rich man, I understand the desire of the Gentile believers of going to the apostate Jews with the gospel of salvation which they reject. And the wish of those who are with the rich man to go to Abraham, signifies the longings of the Jews for the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham concerning a Messiah.

8. By the rich man's five brethren, in his father's house, is meant that part of the house of Israel, which, was broken off through unbelief. Moses was the rich man's *legal father*; and the dispensation of law his father's *house*. Those Jews, therefore, who committed the adultery to which I have before alluded, continued under the law of works, as did the high priest. For those the rich man prays, that Lazarus might go to persuade them to the acceptance of the gospel, before they should open their eyes to all the torments

which he felt in the state of conviction. But Abraham answers, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them:' meaning, that while they turned a deaf ear to the law and the prophets, it would be of no avail to send one from the dead; that is, one possessed of the knowledge of the gospel, being dead as before described.

The reader will observe the parable beginning at the 12th verse, chapter xix, and learn its meaning by comparing it with the parable of the sheep and goats in chapter xxv, of Matthew. This parable points to the destruction of the Jews particularly, see verse 27: 'But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me;' compared with verses 43, 44: 'For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'

No wonder, *perfect humanity* wept over Jerusalem, when viewing the dreadful calamities which were immediately coming upon the ancient people of God, in consequence of their abusing the many blessings and privileges which the Lord bestowed upon an ungrateful people.

I close by asking, Do the Scriptures less condemn those nations who have made void the gospel, through their traditions, than they did the Jews, for abusing the law?

ILLUSTRATION.

As the Saviour concluded the last parable in chapter xv, with the pathetic address of the father to the angry son, so in the succeeding three parables he alluded to the same general subject; the whole of which may be clearly seen, by beginning the 15th chapter and reading, with attention to the conclusion of the 16th. By thus connecting this discourse, as it evidently ought to be, two valuable ends are answered:

1. The true application of these parables is obtained; and,

2. The usual method of treating the parable of the rich man, makes it wholly irrelevant to the subject on which the Saviour was speaking.

With a view to dispose this general subject so that the mind may find an easy access to its various parts, the following method will be observed:

1. The dispensation of the first, or legal priesthood, will be illustrated by the similitude of a stewardship, as stated in the first paragraph of this 16th of St. Luke.

2. The dissolution of the legal priesthood, with some attendant circumstances, all which are represented by the dissolution of a marriage covenant, as stated in the 18th verse of this chapter, will be noticed.

3. The miserable state of moral darkness and death into which the order of high priests under the law, and those of the house of Israel who adhered to those blind guides, were cast, will be shown, under the similitude

of a rich man, his death and his condition afterwards, as stated in the last paragraph of this chapter.

4. The introduction of the Gentiles to the knowledge and faith of the gospel, will be seen, as in the notes, by the similitude of a beggar, carried by angels, after his death, into Abraham's bosom, as stated in the same paragraph. And,

5. That the state of the high priests, and that part of Israel who were broken off through unbelief, ought not to be considered as hopeless, will be shown by the Scriptures.

1. This stewardship of the ministry, under the first priesthood, may be considered as figurative of the stewardship of the ministry of the gospel, with the same propriety that the priesthood of the law represents that of Christ. The stewardship of the gospel ministry is noticed in the following passages: 1 Cor. iv, 1, 2: 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.' Titus i, 7, 9: 'For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught; that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' 1 Peter iv, 10: 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace to God.'

Here we see what the ministers of the gospel are stewards of. They are *stewards* of the *mysteries* of God, and these *mysteries* are the *manifold grace* of

God. So was the stewardship of the ministry of the legal priesthood, in which was dispensed the knowledge of the mysteries of life. See Mal. ii, 4—7: ‘And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace, and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.’ Compare this passage from the prophet with Num. xxv, 12, 13: ‘Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.’ Without any more quotations, we may clearly see that the stewardship of legal priesthood consisted in being in possession of *a covenant of life and peace, in preserving the divine knowledge of this life and peace, and in communicating it to the people, turning them from iniquity, and in making atonement for their sins.* This covenant of life and peace, was such, because it was a figure of a better covenant mentioned Heb. viii, 6: But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.’ The priesthood of the law had power to make an atonement for sin in a figurative sense; for the high priest, under the first covenant, was an eminent representa-

tive of the great apostle and High Priest of our christian profession ; the sacrifices for sin, under the law, were representations of him who was made a sin offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. St. Paul, speaking of those priests, says, ' Who serve unto the *example* and *shadow* of *heavenly things*.' Again, Heb. v, 1, 2: ' For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins ; who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmities.' Chap. iv, 15: ' For we have not an *high priest* which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Thus we see that the priesthood under the law, being a shadow of the priesthood of Christ, was, in the hands of those high priests, a stewardship, as the ministry of the gospel was in the hands of the apostles of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. And it is in reference to this first priesthood that the apostles are called ' priests unto God and the Lamb.'

Having this clear view of the stewardship in which the high priests stood, it is easy to see how the services of that shadowy dispensation ought to have been improved to introduce those stewards and the people, to the everlasting habitation of that covenant which was represented by the first. But the high priest, under the law, is represented by a steward who was accused to his lord of having wasted his lord's money. This accusation has the following support. See in Malachi, ii, succeeding the former quotation from that chapter, verses 8, 9, 10: ' But ye are departed out of

the way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.' See in the 10th verse, the query with which the prophet opposes their partiality : 'Have we not all one Father ? hath not one God created us ? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers ?' Jer. xxiii, 11, 12 : 'For both prophet and priest are profane ; yea, in mine house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore their ways shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness ; they shall be driven on, and fall therein, for I will bring evil upon them, even the years of their visitation, saith the Lord.' Compare this with Matt. xxi, 12, 13 : 'And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves.'

2. The dissolution of the legal priesthood is signified by the parable recorded in the 18th verse of the 16th of St. Luke. This will appear evident if we consider the thread of discourse into which this parable was introduced. Observe the 16th and 17th verses, by which the parable and its true application may be understood. 'The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.' To show the propriety of what he stated in this

testimony concerning the law, its fulfilment, and of its infallibility, Jesus makes use of the following parable: 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.' The reader may now turn an eye to the notes, where this parable is particularly applied. What seems necessary now to consider is, how this law was fulfilled, and as a dispensation, put away. See Matt. v, 17, 18: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'

It was with reference to the fulfilment of the rites of the law that Jesus was baptized of John, the account of which we have in Matt. iii, 13, 14, 15: 'Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.' The prophet in the Psalm xl, points to our subject in very plain and expressive terms; see verses 6, 7, 8: 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.' St. Paul applies this scripture to Christ in such a way as to make the subject under consideration evidently clear. See Heb. x, 4—10: 'For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.'

Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and offerings for sin, thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; (which are offered by the law;) then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will, we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' See also chap. vii, 18, 19: 'For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.' This apostle has expressed the same thing in a similitude like the one in the 16th of Luke. See Rom. vii, 1—4: 'Know ye not brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' As in the words of Christ, so in

these of the apostle, it is shown, that to put away the law while its priesthood was alive, and marry to another, would be adultery. Christ reverses the subject and says, 'And whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.' The apostle says, as above quoted, 'My brethren ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another.' The *body* of Christ, of which it is said, a *body* hast thou prepared me, contained the end and fulfilment of the whole ritual priesthood, so that the offering of that body once for all, *disannulled*, as the apostle's term is, the priesthood of the law, and delivered the people, who were solemnly married to it, from that marriage covenant, so that they were free from the law of their former husband, and at liberty to marry to a risen Saviour. As is shown in the notes, the last adultery spoken of by Christ, was that of marrying to the legal covenant after it was put away. This adultery was committed by the high priests and their disciples, who had lost the knowledge of what those rites represented, and were zealously attached to the letter of the law, seeking righteousness and salvation by it. This brings us as was proposed to consider,

3. The miserable state of moral darkness and death into which the order of high priests under the law, and those of the house of Israel, who adhered to those blind guides, were cast. This is represented in the last paragraph of the 16th of Luke, by the death of a rich man, as the notes plainly show.

Conceiving that the notes on the subject of the rich man and Lazarus are sufficiently explicit in respect to the application of the parable, a more general view of the subject will be taken by recurring to other scrip-

tures illustrative of this state of moral darkness and condemnation. St. Paul speaks of this subject in Rom. ix, 31, 32, 33: 'But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.' Thus they failed in making unto themselves friends of the rites of the first priesthood, because they expected to attain to the law of righteousness, by those literal services, while the weightier matters of the law were omitted, which are judgment, mercy and faith. St. Paul notices the subject somewhat largely in Romans, xi, verse 7: 'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.' Here the apostle refers to Isaiah vi, 9, 10: 'And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' Jeremiah describes the wickedness of the priests, prophets and people, as follows; see chap. v, verse 23: 'But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.' 27—31: 'as a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit; therefore they are become great and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine; yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of

the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?' These *priests* who bore rule by means of the false prophets, waxed *fat* and became *rich*; they devoured widows' houses, and for pretence made long prayer.

Here is the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, who did not judge the right of the needy, and on whom our Saviour pronounced 'the greater damnation.'

The reader will see that the subject on which we are now laboring, has already been considerably discussed in the illustrations of notes on Matthew xxv, where particular attention was paid to the 24th and 23d chapters, with a view to show the general connexion of those chapters, and their fulfilment. In the 23d, Jesus pronounced on his enemies, whom he called a generation of vipers, the damnation of hell. This damnation is described in St. John iii, 19: 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' *Jesus* was the *light*; his preaching and doctrine were particularly directed against the church, which had the high priest as its head, who was surrounded by Pharisees and scribes, of whom the prophet Jeremiah said, as above quoted, 'they overpass the deeds of the wicked.' They had, by their traditions, established criteria by which they distinguished between the righteous and the wicked. Those who conformed to the traditions of the elders,

were righteous ; but those who did not, were accursed ; and it was then as customary to talk of *the righteous*, and *the wicked*, as it is now in the *antichristian church*. But as it is now, so it was then : those who accounted themselves to be righteous, overpassed, in iniquity, the deeds of those whom they called wicked.

Here is seen, not through a glass darkly, but as face answers to face in water, the reason why the Jewish church rejected Christ, and also why the antichristian church of the present day does the same. Jesus was accused by the Jewish church of being a friend to publicans and sinners ; and this is the accusation urged at present by the antichristian church. The judgments of God on the antichristian church are mentioned, as has been noticed in a former part of this work, in Rev. xviii. And for a full account of the judgments of God on the Jewish church, the reader is referred to Leviticus xxvi ; from which a number of passages are here inserted without particular reference to the verses : ‘ I also will do this unto you ; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart ; and ye shall sow your seed in vain ; for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies ; they that hate you shall reign over you ; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. I will break the pride of your power ; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain ; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And I will bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant ; and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you ; and *ye shall be delivered into the hands of the enemy*. I,

even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth; And they shall fall one upon another as it were before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.'

The iniquitous conduct of this wicked church, and God's judgments upon it, are spoken of in Psalm lxix, 18—28: 'Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it; deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor: mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me

also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not, and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.' Time would fail to mention all the passages of Scripture which relate to, and point out the state of moral darkness and death into which the Jewish church was cast at the close of the first priesthood; the foregoing, in connexion with the scriptures and arguments on the same subject, used in the illustrations of former parables, perhaps are sufficient. And truly, if the damnation of hell consists in the darkness, blindness, punishments and sufferings above described by Moses and David, no wonder Jesus wept over that people on whom he pronounced such terrible condemnation.

4. As was proposed, a few passages on the subject of the introduction of the Gentiles to the knowledge and faith of the gospel, will now be considered. Of this, the prophet Isaiah speaks in a most beautiful manner, chapter xlix, 6: '*And he said, Art thou lighter than that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolation of Israel? I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*'

The above passage is here quoted from the marginal reading, as it seems more proper to put the first part of the text in the form of a question, than of an assertion; and the word *desolation*, seems more applicable to the subject of *restoring*, than the word *preserved*. See chapter xlii, 6, 7: 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.' Amos ix, 11, 12: 'In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord, that doeth this.'

This passage from Amos is quoted by the apostle James, in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, applied to these words of Peter: 'Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.' The passage quoted from the 49th of Isaiah, St. Paul quoted in Acts xiii, 47: 'For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.' Isaiah lxii, 2: 'And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory.' Chap. lx, 3: 'And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of

thy rising.' Chap. liv, 3: 'For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.' These few passages, from the many which speak of the same subject, show that the Gentiles, who were represented by a beggar without the rich man's gate, were carried by the apostles of the Lamb, into the faith of Abraham, which is represented by Abraham's bosom. The *bosom*, signifying fatherly love and faithfulness, is a beautiful representation of the covenant mercies into which the believing Gentiles were received. See this subject as represented by St. Paul to the Galatians, iii, 7, 8, 9: 'Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the *children of Abraham*. And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.' See verse 14: 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.' It is said, in the parable, that the rich man saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Very far indeed! The moral distance between the state in which we have seen the Jewish church, and that in which we have seen the Gentile church of believing christians, is very great, and astonishingly different. The state of the former is that of wretchedness in the extreme, while that of the latter is in the same proportion glorious.

It remains that we show, as was proposed,

5. That the state of the high priests, and that part of Israel who were broken off through unbelief, ought not to be considered as hopeless. This rich man has

been generally considered as some individual person, known to our Saviour, who was very covetous and unfeeling in his lifetime, who literally died and went to a state of misery in the future world, from which misery there never can be any deliverance. This account is also made of general use to prove the common doctrine of the endless miseries of the wicked who die without faith in Christ. It is hoped, however, that the notes, together with the foregoing illustration, set this matter in a very different light to the unprejudiced mind; and show, in too plain a manner to be misunderstood, that our Saviour was discoursing on no such subject as this passage is generally applied to. Having found satisfactory reasons for applying the parable of the rich man to the Jewish church, in manner and form as set forth in the notes, and the foregoing illustrations, the present object, as above stated, is to show, from the Scriptures, that that church is not left in a hopeless condition. Labors on this subject may properly be directed to show,

1. That nothing in the denunciations of Moses, recorded in the 26th of Leviticus, can, with the least propriety, be explained so as to exclude that people eternally from the divine favor; and,

2. That the Scriptures do, in a direct and positive manner, insure us the joyful hope for which we are now seeking.

1. Of the denunciations recorded in the 26th of Leviticus. Let it be first noticed that the punishments there described, are not only said to be *for the sins* of that people, but *according to their sins*. See verse 18: 'And if you will not for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more *for your sins*.' Verse 21: 'And if ye walk contrary unto me, and

will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, *according to your sins.*' Let it be asked in the next place, what those punishments were? Answer: Terror, consumption, burning ague, loss of harvest by the enemy, being slain by their enemies, ruled by their enemies, they should flee when none pursued, the pride of their power should be broken, their heaven should be as iron and their earth as brass, they should spend their strength in vain through the barrenness of their land, their children and their cattle were to be destroyed by wild beasts, their highways were to be desolate, a sword should be brought upon them which should avenge the quarrel of God's covenant, the pestilence should be sent among them, they should be delivered into the hands of their enemies, for want of bread they should eat and not be satisfied, they should eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, their high places and images should be destroyed, their carcasses should be cast upon the carcasses of their idols, their cities should be made waste, their sanctuaries should be brought into desolation, their land should be brought into desolation, their enemies should dwell in their land, they should be scattered among the heathen, a sword should be drawn out after them, on them who were left alive a faintness should be sent even into their hearts, the sound of a shaken leaf should chase them, they should fall one upon another as it were before a sword, they should perish among the heathen, the land of their enemies should eat them up, they should pine away in their iniquity in their enemies' land, and in the iniquities of their fathers they should pine away. Let us now ask two questions: 1. Is it possible to conceive of any punishment more dreadful than the foregoing, to which mortal beings in this state of exis-

tence are subject? 2. Is it possible to conceive that any or all of these punishments will be inflicted on that people, or on any other, in a future state, and to all eternity? These questions will be answered in the negative by all candid persons. What then is the necessary conclusion? Answer: If these punishments were for the sins of that people, were according to their sins, and sufficient to avenge the quarrel of God's covenant, then it is certain beyond all contradiction, that the sins of that people did not deserve, in the eyes of God, who is the proper judge, never ending punishment in the eternal world; nor will God have an occasion, in order to avenge the quarrel of his covenant with that people, to quarrel with them to all eternity. The form of expression here used, though rather harsh, is justified by the sacred text; and it being well calculated to show the nature of the subject in a very evident light, is admitted.

That all these judgments do not render the state of that church hopeless, may be seen by noticing the remainder of this chapter. See from the 40th verse to the close: 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the

punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God. I am the Lord. These are the statutes and judgments, and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.' The Lord God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had the whole management of the foregoing covenant, laws, statutes and judgments; and by them he will judge his people; he will see the whole faithfully executed, but he is under no obligation to forget his covenant, or to become unmerciful at the instigation of unmerciful men. Here let us quote the declaration of Stephen. See Acts vii, 51—54: 'Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things they were *cut to the heart*, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.' They now saw their dreadful state; they felt the force of those words of Stephen and could not withstand it; they knew his testimony was true; therefore it cut them to the heart. They had received the law, but had not

kept it, and the judgments written were against them. On them Jesus had pronounced the damnation of hell; but let it be noticed, that Jesus pronounced on them nothing, which was not written in their law; as a faithful judge, to whom all judgment was committed, he would not go beyond the statutes and judgments of his Father.

But it is time to consider,

2. That the Scriptures do, in a direct and positive manner, insure us the joyful hope for which we are now seeking. See Isaiah xlv, 25: 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.' See how this testimony, so directly to the point in question, is introduced: verses 22, 23, 24: 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. *Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*' If this oath of Jehovah be ever fulfilled, universal submission to God and his righteousness must be the consequence. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Let us see the ground of this justification. Observe, particularly, it is in the Lord. See Rom. iv, 25: 'Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. V. 18: 'Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' St. Paul not only notices the darkness and blindness of the house of Israel, in his 11th chapter to

the Romans, in a very ample manner, but is careful to direct a particular and most luminous argument to show that those blinded Jews will at last obtain salvation. Thus he argues: 'I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so *all Israel shall be saved*; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he

might have mercy upon all.' These blinded, fallen, broken off and diminished Jews, are those on whom Jesus pronounced the damnation of hell; they are those on whom the law pronounced all its curses; but they are those likewise, the receiving of whom shall be life from the dead; they are those also who shall be justified in the Lord; and in him shall they glory.

Whoever duly read and compare the foregoing scriptures, and yet not acknowledge their force to support the hope for which we are seeking, must, it is conceived, be influenced by something worse than mere blindness, and be totally opposed in their hearts and affections to the glorious truth which these scriptures so evidently prove. See Ezek. xvi, 59: 'For thus saith the Lord God, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.' Here let the query be carefully handled: Had Jerusalem despised an oath, and broken a covenant? Yes. What covenant? That which God made with their fathers. What had they done? They made and worshipped images. With what service did they serve those images? God's complaint against them is as follows: 'Thou tookest thy broideder garments and coveredst them, (the images,) and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savor. Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.' If the reader can endure more, let him read the whole of the 16th of Ezekiel, and then open his ears to the following excl-

mation in verse 23, *Wo, wo, unto thee! saith the Lord God.*

If God deal with those covenant breakers accordingly as they have dealt with him, what will he do? notice particularly that in the 59th verse God says, as above quoted, 'I will even deal with thee as thou hast done.' If so, will he ever show them any favor? Read with attention the very next words, as follows: 'Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, *but not by thy covenant.* And I will establish *my covenant* with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.' Did God know that he could punish that covenant breaking, idolatrous people according to what they had done, and afterwards establish another and an everlasting covenant with them? If so, the commonly received opinion, that the rebellious people deserve and will positively endure never ending torment in a future state, is not true. On the other hand, the hope for which we are seeking, receives strength and support from the force and evidence of the above scriptures; for if a people who had broken a solemn covenant of their God and gone from his worship and bowed down to images of their own make, and offered as sacrifices their own offspring, could be punished according to what they had done, and yet receive from God the mercies of another and an everlasting covenant, we have reason, and that sufficient, to believe and hope in the salvation of that people which the parable in the last paragraph of the 16th of Luke repre-

sents. If it be suggested that those of whom Ezekiel spoke were not so great sinners as some other people, it may be well to look and see what he says on this subject. See verse 48: 'As I live, saith the Lord, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.'" Verse 51: 'Neither hath Samaria committed *half* of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they.' If we allow that God spoke these words by the prophet, we must of course suppose that he knew nothing, at that time, of the doctrine of the *infinity of sin*, which our doctors now hold as an essential article of the christian faith! For if Sodom and Samaria had not committed *half* the abomination that Jerusalem had, and yet had sinned to an infinite degree, it is very plain that Jerusalem had sinned to the amount of more than two infinities.

Perhaps, however, we ought here to ask pardon of the doctors for comparing their creed with the word of God, with which it has so little connexion. In the 60th and 61st verses, as has been quoted, God promises to give Sodom and Samaria to that people whose sins had been greater than either of those had committed, for daughters, and to establish with them an everlasting covenant. Our antichristian divines have been so determined to maintain the doctrine of endless, unmerciful punishment, that they have ventured to say that nothing in the 16th of Ezekiel, in the least favors the opinion that there is mercy either for Jerusalem, Samaria and her daughters, or Sodom and her daughters; while the Holy Ghost on the other hand testifies that Samaria and Sodom shall be given to Jerusalem for daughters, and that God will establish with her an everlasting covenant, and that she shall know the Lord.

On this subject it is just to observe, if we believe the Holy Ghost, we must disbelieve the doctrine and arguments of our divines; if we disbelieve their doctrines and arguments, we must admit, however hard it may seem, that their doctrine is the doctrine of anti-christ, and that their arguments are directed against the truth as it is in Jesus.

Having given this subject as ample support as the limits of the present work will admit, and humbly conceiving that this support will be considered sufficient to substantiate the truth to which the arguments have been directed, it is necessary to conclude these illustrations, by observing,

1. That on such an examination of the Scriptures as the foregoing notes and illustrations have led to, I am under the necessity of saying, that the light of divine revelation appears more evident in the restoration of all mankind, from sin to holiness, from death to life, from misery to happiness, and from mortality to immortality through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, than it formerly did, though I was satisfied before that this truth was embraced in the Scriptures.

2. That the view taken, in this work, of the dealings of God with mankind, in so disposing of rewards and punishments as to give every suitable encouragement to moral virtue and religious piety, and faithfully and successfully to correct the wickedness of his alienated offspring, comports incomparably better with the spirit of Christ and all the graces of the gospel, than the sentiment does, which represents divine justice to be unmerciful in the execution of punishment.

JOHN V. 28, 29.

[The following pages are supplementary to the former editions.]

‘Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.’—John v, 28, 29.

THIS passage is one of a number which the popular doctrine of the Church has applied to a future state of condemnation and misery. It has been used to set forth and maintain that those who do *good* in this world will be raised from the dead hereafter and be justified unto life in an immortal constitution, for the good works which they did in this world; and that those who do *evil* in this mortal state, will be raised, at the same time, into an immortal constitution, and condemned to everlasting misery for the evil they did while on earth.

In the first place we shall suggest some arguments against the doctrine, for the support of which this text has been used.

In this doctrine there is a manifest want of that due connexion between cause and effect, which we find so wonderfully displayed in the natural order of things. While we are here in the body, if we feed on wholesome and nourishing food, the natural effects are health and strength of body; but if we, from whatever cause, feed on that which is unwholesome or poisonous, the consequences are the reverse of the former, and sickness and weakness are sure to follow. But it would be evidently absurd to attempt to argue, on physical principles, that these effects, either of health

and sickness, or strength and weakness, will be experienced in a state of immortality, after this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Now it is plain from the Scriptures, that all sin, all wickedness, and all evil doings are the works of the flesh; and there appears no more reason for supposing that the effects of these works are to extend into the immortal state, than for supposing that the effects of wholesome, or unwholesome food are to extend to that state.

If one sow grain in a field in New England, it follows of natural consequence, that the harvest will be gathered from the same field; but there appears no natural connexion, as between cause and effect, between sowing grain in this country and gathering a harvest from it in Europe. St. Paul says, 'He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.' This seems perfectly natural, because, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' But to argue that corruption may be gathered from an incorruptible state, is to argue against the very nature of things.

The apostle to the Romans is explicit on this subject, when he says, 'There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.'

By this it is evident that condemnation cannot exist any longer than men walk after the flesh; and none pretend that any of the human family will walk after the flesh in that incorruptible state of which the apostle speaks, when he says, 'This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.'

We can easily discern the natural connexion between all the vices which are practised by men, and the infe-

licities which these vices introduce into society, and the unhappiness they occasion to those who practise them; but it is totally impossible to trace the connexion between these vices and a state of permanent misery in the world to come.

2. As this opinion of a state of immortal happiness for the good works of men in this life, and a state of endless misery for their evil works while here, is supposed to fall under the notice of those scriptures which teach us that God will render to every man according to his works, it seems proper that we look to see if we can find such a proportion between the virtues which are practised in this life, and a state of immortal felicity; and between the vices committed here, and a state of endless torment, as will justify this doctrine. The moment this inquiry is proposed, the absurdity of the doctrine appears; for there is a much nearer proportion between the labor of one hour and the wealth of the whole world as its reward, than can be seen between all the good works which a man could perform during a long life, and the recompense of an immortal state of complete happiness. Nor is there so great a proportion between all the sins which one could possibly commit in this life and the recompense of a state of endless misery, as between the smallest offence ever committed on earth, and a retaliation of the most severe and protracted tortures which could be inflicted in this mortal state. These statements are self-evident facts, which we know to be true as well as we know that a day is not as long as a year, or that one grain is not equal to a ton.

According to the Scriptures, we are authorised to believe, that the blessings of the gospel in this life are far too great to be considered as being according to

our works. St. Paul says, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' Again the same author says, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' Now if the salvation obtained in this life by the grace of God, is too great to be considered according to our works, there surely is not the shadow of propriety in supposing that a state of permanent felicity in the eternal world is according to our works in this. But the proportion between our good works in this world and a state of endless happiness in the next, is as near as between our sins here and a state of endless misery hereafter.

3. This doctrine of endless rewards and punishments is involved in an insuperable difficulty for the want of power to distinguish between the meet subjects for these respective rewards.

What will this doctrine do, for instance, with David, king of Israel? That he did evil, and that to a most heinous degree, is evident from the faithful records of Scripture. Now if they, who in this life have done evil are to be raised into an immortal state of misery, David will be thus raised to condemnation. It may be said that he became a good man, and did many good things after he committed the abominations which are recorded of him. This we are happy to acknowledge; but what does this prove? only that David was like other men, and sometimes did that which was right, and at other times that which was wrong? For another instance, where will the doctrine under consideration place St. Paul in the eternal state? That he did evil in this world the Scriptures as fully prove as they

prove any thing. But it will be said that this man was reformed and became a good man. This too we are happy to acknowledge; but what more does this prove than that St. Paul was like David, and like other men, a changeable creature, who sometimes did right and sometimes wrong? The truth is, all men are in some degree righteous and in some degree wicked; and it follows, that if all who do good in this world are to be eternally happy hereafter, all mankind will be happy; and on the other hand, if all who do evil in this life are to be endlessly miserable in the next, all men will be thus miserable.

4. The doctrine under consideration is absurd in that it supposes that the good works and virtues of men, in this imperfect state, are more meritorious than the perfect and permanent virtue which will characterize the blessed in heaven; for if that immortal state of holiness and felicity is merited by the virtue imperfectly practised in this mortal state, there remains no merit in the virtues practised in the future world, nor any reward for that superior degree of righteousness. And on the other hand, this doctrine involves another absurdity, in that it recompenses the sins of this life with a state of endless and positive misery, but reserves no punishment for the sins of which the souls of the miserable will be guilty in that state where they will sin without restraint. Why should imperfect righteousness merit an eternity of happiness, and yet perfect righteousness merit nothing? Why should the sins of this life be recompensed with a state of everlasting or eternal misery, and the entire sin of the eternal world go forever unpunished? Once more: this doctrine maintains that God will punish his rational offspring without mercy, without designing their **rec-**

conciliation or profit. This, of all the objections which we have to the doctrine under consideration, is the greatest. This supposes that God possesses a worse disposition, and practises greater cruelty, than the wicked possess or practise. All the cruelties of heathen idolatry are tender mercies in comparison with the cruelty attributed to our heavenly Father by this doctrine. People may be deceived by the names which superstition uses to identify this cruelty in God; but the *name* of a thing alters not its *nature*. Vindictive wrath, holy anger, retributive justice, are terms used to designate a property of the divine nature which, when examined impartially and without a superstitious awe, is found to be worthy of no better name than unmerciful malevolence. To attribute such a quality or character to God, we view as the vilest act that moral darkness has ever produced; and we reject the sentiment with the deepest horror.

Let it be distinctly noticed here, that this argument does not lie between the doctrine of endless punishment, and *no* punishment for sin: we have ever maintained that sin *is* punished; but we find it is punished in the world where it is, and not in an immortal state where it is not.

Having, as was proposed, suggested a few arguments against the doctrine, for the support of which our text has been generally used, our next labor will be directed to bring the portion of Scripture under consideration, before the reader in connexion with such other passages as relate to events which evidently belong to the present state of existence, but where language signifying a resurrection is used; at the same time carefully comparing with them those passages which evidently relate to a resurrection into an immortal state,

that it may be clearly understood that the latter and former classes of texts, cannot with any propriety, be applied to the same event.

The arguments to which we have attended, are designed to show that the text under consideration ought not to be applied in the usual way, by showing that the doctrine supported by it, when so used, is not true. The arguments now designed, will go to show that the Scriptures make use of words signifying a resurrection, in a *figurative* sense, when nothing beyond this mortal state is intended ; that the passage under consideration is of this description, and that it is proved to be so by comparing it with other passages which evidently have their application in time, and also by comparing it with passages which speak of a resurrection into an immortal state, by observing the difference there is between the two classes.

That our text evidently belongs to that class of passages which speak of a spiritual resurrection, or of a resurrection which has no allusion to a future state of being, may be seen by attending to the context, which reads as follows : ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.’ Here it is perfectly plain that the death from which the believers had passed, was of a moral and not a literal kind ; and it is perfectly plain also, that the life into which they had already entered, was of a spiritual nature, which believers enjoy by the means of faith in the word of Jesus, in the present time. And it is furthermore evident, that the condemnation mentioned in the passage already quoted, is a condemnation which is the consequence of unbelief in the present

life, and is the same as is signified by the following words of Jesus; 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' The next words to those quoted from our context, are the following: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.' It is abundantly evident that the Saviour still continued to speak of the dead in trespasses and sins, of their hearing and believing his word, and of the spiritual life, which faith in the gospel wrought in them. And it is also evident that his authority, which he here mentions, to execute judgment, administers that condemnation into which the unbeliever is brought. Our text follows the words last quoted; 'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which, all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.' Now as it is acknowledged by all, that Christ was speaking *figuratively* in the context, until he came to the words of our text, it seems entirely unwarranted to make him now, all of a sudden, speak of a *literal* resurrection.

It is altogether more reasonable to suppose, that as he meant the dead in a moral or spiritual sense, by the dead who should hear his voice and live, he now means the sinful state of carnal minds by the graves from which the dead were to come forth.

That the word graves is used figuratively in Scripture, we learn from the 37th of Ezekiel, where the

prophet represents the return of the captivity of Israel from the countries where they had been scattered ; first, by the resurrection of the dry bones in the valley of vision ; and secondly, by bringing them out of their graves. And here we may remark, that there would be the same propriety in understanding the prophet to mean a *figurative* resurrection by the dry bones, representing the return of Israel's captivity ; but when he speaks of bringing them out of their graves, to mean their resurrection from their *literal* graves into an immortal state, as there is in explaining our text and context in the usual way.

There is a passage in the 12th of Daniel, which commentators very justly consider a parallel passage with our text ; it reads as follows : ' And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time ; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' It seems reasonable to suppose, that as Jesus came to fulfil the law and the prophets, he had his eye on this passage in Daniel when he spoke the words of our text ; and that he meant by those who were in the graves, the same as Daniel meant by those who were asleep in the dust of the earth ; and by those who should come forth to the resurrection of life, he meant the same that Daniel did by those who should awake from the dust of the earth to everlasting life ; and by those who should come forth to the resurrection of condemnation, the same that Daniel meant by those

who should come forth unto 'shame and everlasting contempt.'

Will the reader now say that all this may be, and that both Daniel and the Saviour were speaking of the resurrection of mankind to a state of immortal happiness and misery in a future world! To this we reply, when Jesus spoke to his disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the calamities which should shortly come on the Jews, he uses the words of Daniel nearly verbatim. By this circumstance we are instructed that both Daniel and the Saviour spoke of the same time and of the same events, and that that time was, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

The true meaning of the words of Jesus and of the passage in Daniel, appears to be this: those Jews who listened to the mild voice of the gospel, proclaimed by Christ and his apostles, came forth from spiritual death to the life of faith in the new covenant; but those Jews, who rejected the doctrine of salvation, crucified the Saviour, and persecuted his apostles, were those who had done evil, and they were roused from the dormant state in which they lay, as in a covenant of death and a refuge of lies, by the voice of judgment, and came forth to the resurrection of that condemnation which is so particularly pointed out in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew.

In the account of the resurrection noticed in our text, some are raised to life and some to condemnation; and this account we have seen agrees so well with the testimony quoted from Daniel, that no doubt remains that the Saviour and the prophet spoke of the same event. But can we make St. Paul's account of the resurrection of all mankind into an immortal state

agree with these several testimonies so as to be satisfied that the apostle was treating on the same subject of which Daniel and the Saviour treated?

Jesus says that 'they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.' Daniel says, 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall come forth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' St. Paul says, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' And he is particular in stating the constitution which all men will receive in the resurrection of which he speaks. It is spiritual, incorruptible, immortal and glorious; it is the image of the Lord from heaven. He makes no distinction. He says nothing of the good works of some and the evil works of others. His testimony is, in fact, directly against any distinction or difference in that immortal state: *All* are made alive in Christ; and as this life is spiritual, incorruptible and immortal, this testimony agrees with the testimony of Jesus to the Sadducees on the same subject of the resurrection, in which he says, that in the resurrection, they are the children of God, equal unto the angels, and can die no more. In this debate with the Sadducees, Jesus gave no intimation that any would rise from the dead to a state of condemnation, but was particular in saying that *all* live unto God.

In our present light of this subject, we can plainly see, that by supposing that Jesus spoke in our text of the same subject of which he spoke in his reply to the Sadducees, we make him contradict himself. And by supposing that our text is a testimony of the same event of which St. Paul spoke in his argument on the

resurrection in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, we set the testimony of Jesus and St. Paul at an irreconcilable variance.

By applying, in an indiscriminate manner, those passages of Scripture which specially belong to the temporal, mutable state of man in this life, and those which speak of an immortal state, all to the future existence of mankind, the greatest absurdities have been supported by the Scriptures. In the same way the dispute between those who contend for salvation by the agency of the creature, and those who maintain that works are out of the question relative to salvation, has been protracted for ages in the christian church. And yet if the passages of Scripture, which are quoted on both sides of the argument were applied to their respective subjects, there would be no room for dispute, nor occasion for any difference of sentiment.

For instance, the account we have of the judgment in the 25th of Matthew, proceeds according to the works of those who are judged; and those who are welcomed to the kingdom, are justified according to their works, and those who are sentenced to punishment are so condemned according to their conduct.

Now as this passage is applied to the eternal state of the unseen world by both parties in the dispute just named, those who rest the final justification of the creature on his works, seem to have a decided advantage in the dispute. And it is all in vain for the opposer to try to reconcile this passage with his notion of justifying the creature to everlasting life in the eternal world, without any reference to his good works in this world. This he will not attempt to do; but in order to do away the force of this judgment, he quotes some passages which speak of grace to the exclusion of works;

such as the following: 'Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted unto him for righteousness.' As it is perfectly evident that these passages on the very face of them, were designed to set forth the grace and salvation of God in a way to exclude the works of the saved as the ground of such salvation, the argument now fairly turns in favor of the other side; for here are more passages than the one brought in favor of the contrary side.

What is the next thing to be done? Does he who predicates salvation on works, undertake to show that the passages last quoted do not indicate the fact for which they are adduced? No; for this would be labor lost; it would be as easy to prove that these passages mean nothing. What then does he do? He proceeds to quote some more scripture on the other side, such as the following: 'The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land, but if ye rebel ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for

they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. As it is perfectly evident that these last quoted passages do not indicate that men are justified without good works, but in consequence of them, the dispute stands exactly as it did when it began, and where it must stand until these disputants come to a determination to understand particular passages of the Scriptures according to the particular subjects to which they respectively belong.

All those passages which speak of judging and rewarding men according to their works, have their true and just application to that divine economy in which our heavenly Father administers to his mortal offspring that discipline, which grows from his love and faithfulness, and which our imperfection requires.

On the other hand, all those passages which speak of the abundant grace of God, of his great love to sinners, of his saving us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, have their true and just application to that divine and gracious economy of the Father of our spirits, in which he has made ample provision for the spiritual and eternal welfare of all mankind. And if we are careful to keep the different subjects of which the Scriptures treat, as distinct from each other as the divine testimony requires, we shall never apply the passage under consid-

eration to the immortal state of man ; nor is it believed, by your servant, that any other passage can be found, which speaks of rewarding men for their good works, and of punishing others for their evil works, which can; with the least color of propriety be applied to the state of men, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption. To pretend that it is not convenient or proper for men to be rewarded in this world according to their works here, is more absurd than it would be to argue, that it is not convenient or proper for children to receive rewards of merit, and chastisement for disobedience, at the school where they receive their education. And to contend that all the good works, and all the evil works done in this mortal state are to be judged and recompensed in the eternal world, is a thousand times more unreasonable than it would be for a parent of vast wealth to go to the schoolmaster who educated his children, and demand a particular account of every thing his children did while at school, and then proceed to make his last will and testament according to that account.

To conclude : while our text assures us, that good works will never go unrewarded, nor evil works unrecompensed, it by no means intrudes on the eternal inheritance given us in Christ Jesus ; nor does it in any way contradict the testimony, that, ' As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'





