

Consolation for bereaved Parents.

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF
THREE SERMONS,
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I AM about to introduce and discuss a subject, which I have never before spoken upon publicly, and which, till very lately, has seldom occupied my thoughts, or engaged any part of my meditations; so as to decide, positively, and with perfect satisfaction of mind, upon so critical and important a point: indeed, it never before so forcibly claimed, or so powerfully engaged my attention. As I have considered, since I knew any thing of salvation, and, especially, since I have been employed in preaching the Gospel of bleeding love, that as Infants are not the objects of our public address, it would be highly incompatible with the very nature and design of the Gospel ministry, to make their eternal state a subject of public discussion.

But, I assure you, my friends, that I feel a peculiar pleasure, this evening, in ascending the pul-

pit, to address you upon this critical and curious subject. I call it *critical*, because it has been thought, and is still thought, by some, impossible to ascertain the real state of departed infants: *curious*, because an inquiry into their eternal state, is also supposed to be merely speculative, *fanciful*, and chimerical; as it is absolutely impossible, they suppose, after the most elaborate examination, and critical disquisition, ever to arrive at a certainty of their real state, so as to decide, positively, either upon their election or reprobation, their damnation or salvation. But my mind is so sweetly liberated from all perplexity on the subject, and so decidedly determined, upon the ground of Scripture, that I have a peculiar heart-felt pleasure in entering upon its discussion; a pleasure, arising not merely from a mind determined and decided for itself, but from several other considerations; *first*—I am happy in having an opportunity of fully declaring my sentiments upon this subject, before such numerous auditory; because I have been misrepresented, and falsely criminated, upon the groundless charge of holding, and verbally publishing, Infant Damnation; and I am still more happy that it is now in my power, through the gracious direction of the Lord, to establish, as an incontrovertible fact, upon the sure basis of inspired proof, upon the Word of God, most decidedly and positively, the Salvation of Infants; *saved*, equally with ourselves, by the free and abounding grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord; which must be of the high-

est importance to Bereaved Parents, as it can never fail to prove, a source of unbounded consolation to their afflicted minds. But, most of all, I am happy in having an opportunity of addressing you upon a subject, which calls our thoughts to eternal things ; because, as the interest of Christ, so far as the Lord is pleased to bless me with love to his truth, and his people, is exceedingly near to my heart ; and, as I am anxious to see the prosperity and increase of the Church, I feel my soul more particularly, and more earnestly concerned for the salvation of *adults*. And, I am, this night, particularly impressed with a warm desire, and animated with an hope, that the God of all grace will make bare the arm of his salvation, and so over-rule, and bless the subject, which you are so anxious to hear discussed, that some of his blood-bought elect, who are now involved in ignorance, may be brought home, to see the beauties of Christ, to know the love of his heart, and to feel the saving power of his omnipotent arm. And should this be the time, the set time, thus to favour Sion, the Lord's own appointed time, to bring the filthy to the fountain of Christ's blood for cleansing, they will not only rejoice to hear of Infant Salvation, but will either earnestly inquire after, or triumphantly exult in, their own personal and individual interest in the salvation of Christ.

The passage of God's Word, upon which I shall found this Discussion, is written in

2 KINGS IV. 26.

“ IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD? AND SHE ANSWERED—IT IS WELL ”

THIS is, no doubt, the language of cheerful submission and resignation to the Divine will, uttered by a tried soul, as rebellious, by nature, as we are; but whose rebellious passions were all subdued by divine love, and who was brought to lie submissive at his feet, who does all things well; and, under whose infinitely wise direction and government, all things work together for good to those who love God, and who are the called according to his purpose. And it is, certainly, a striking and admirable instance of what Almighty grace can do, in causing a rebellious sinner, whose turbulent passions, like a troubled sea, cast up nothing but mire and dirt, to yield cheerfully to his sovereign dispensation, and to say, though almost bereaved of every thing, *It is well*. But are we to conclude, that the expression has no other implication, when used in reference to her *child*?

There is no doubt with me, but, that, as the child was dead, she possessed the most pleasurable persuasion, that its immortal soul was with God: for she did not merely say—It is well that the Lord has thus dealt *with me*, but it is well *with the child*—evidently implying, the child is *happy*. I am confirmed in this opinion by a great variety of scriptures, which harmoniously correspond to establish, as a plain truth, the certain salvation of

those who die in their infancy ; and, therefore, I hope to produce such a chain of evidences, such a glorious corroboration of witnesses, whose veracity is never to be doubted, as to settle all disputations upon the subject, and to reduce to a most glorious certainty, the Salvation of Infants !

But, before I proceed, it is necessary for me to inform you of the circumstance which gave rise to the subject. I have been in the habit of receiving *anonymous* letters, some of which have been so replete with ignorance, mingled with impudence ; others, with so much scurrility and abuse, that I thought it best to treat them with profound silence. But I lately received one, by post, written in such a Christian and gentlemanly style, that I have thought it particularly entitled to my attention. This Letter, providentially, engaged my thoughts upon the subject which now solicits your serious consideration. But I will first read to you the Letter :

“ SIR,

“ IF the doctrine you advanced yesterday evening be true ; namely, *That it is impossible for an elect person to die, before he is brought to a knowledge of his personal interest in the covenant of grace*, permit me to ask—What becomes of all those who die in their infancy ? Is an infant of an *hour old*, capable of a knowledge of its interest in the covenant of grace ? I do not ask these questions from mere curiosity, nor because I think you

incapable of answering them; but, being the father of a family, and having had several children die in their infancy, you will oblige me by taking up the subject the first opportunity, to say something illustrative of that particular point.

“ Your’s, sincerely,

“ A CONSTANT HEARER.”

I think it is not to be supposed that the writer of this Letter is an enemy to that truth upon which he founds the questions; but, when he says, “ If the doctrine be truth, &c. he is rather to be understood as laying down an hypothesis to argue from, as a good ground, upon which he has a right to advance the subject of Infant Salvation, to which that assertion of mine, appeared to him, hostile and unfriendly; therefore he places them in contact, and then asks me, if possible, to reconcile these seemingly discordant doctrines. But he is so far from considering them for ever irreconcilable, that he entertains an hope of my being able to make them harmonize and agree for he compliments me (not to say flatters me) by saying, “ I do not ask these questions because I think you incapable of answering them.” I am very much obliged to the Gentleman for his high opinion of me, and I sincerely pray, that the Lord may so direct and enable me to speak upon this subject, that my answers to these questions may not only be satisfactory to the Querist, but also to this very numerous, respectable, and attentive au-

ditory, that I have now the honour to address. The Querist is very justifiable, because he evidently asks these questions, not through mere curiosity, but impelled by tender paternal affection ; and would, no doubt, feel himself peculiarly happy to have the Salvation of Infants placed in such a clear point of view, as completely to harmonize with the distinguishing doctrines of the everlasting Gospel.

I shall, therefore, immediately take up, and attempt to answer the first question—*What becomes of all those who die in their infancy?* To which I answer,

1st. They are not saved on account of any natural purity which they possess: they are sinners, or they could not die; “for the wages of sin is death”—*corporeal*, as well as *spiritual*, and everlasting. To say, then, that their salvation is certain, on account of the holiness and purity of their nature, their sinless perfection, and unsullied innocence, is an absurdity too glaring to contend with for a moment—it will not bear “the shock of rational discussion;” nor does it call for refutation, being so clearly controverted by infant *mortality*. For it must be undeniably clear to every thinking mind, that if death be the wages of sin—children, in a state of sinless perfection, could not die; their death would be morally impossible. But we are positively told, by an inspired writer, that “Death

reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" Romans v. 14: that is, over those who had not *practically* sinned; but who were, notwithstanding, sinners in consequence of Adam's transgression, and the taint derived naturally from him, by which every part, power, and passion of the immortal mind are rendered corrupt. I will, therefore, take upon me to prove, that a child of an *hour old* is a sinner, and as unclean by nature as ourselves: in proof of which, I shall refer you to Psalm li. 5, and lviii. 3; Proverbs xxii. 15. In Psalm li. 5, David, under a deep sense of his sins, goes to God with that penitential confession—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here, after making, with the most cutting, heartfelt lamentation, a confession of his practical sins, he looks to the hole of the pit whence he was digged—remembers his polluted origin, and traces all his crimson crimes back to the corrupt fountain, whence they issued; and acknowledges, "I was shapen in iniquity:" even *shapen, formed* in iniquity itself! before he came forth of the womb—before he breathed in our atmosphere, or sucked the nutritious breasts of his mother. Hence, in the next Scripture, Psalm lviii. 3. he goes on to confess—"The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies:" to which, Solomon agrees, in Proverbs xxii. 15. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." And if such be the nature of pollution, corruption, and foolish-

ness of the heart of a child, I will contend, *if saved*, they must be saved entirely of grace, and are as much indebted to the blood of Christ for cleansing as those of the redeemed who live, and are left to perpetrate the most horrid crimes; and to contaminate their lives, with the highest rebellion against heaven.

2nd. The infants of believers are not saved by virtue of religious descent, or because they are the natural progeny of godly parents: this has long been a plea with some professors of Christianity, for the salvation of their departed children; in defence of which they generally have recourse to, Acts ii. 37. and 1 Corinthians vii. 14. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." But if these Scriptures are considered in consonance with others, and consistently with the analogy of faith, it will be found but a mere subterfuge, invented by the *pitiful*, to conciliate and compose, the perturbed mind of a bereaved parent, without any good ground for substantial consolation.

Why should believers children be better than those of unbelievers? are they not equally conceived in sin, with the same vicious propensities

and at as great a distance from God? And however their *natural* understanding may be illuminated by, what is commonly denominated, a religious education, are they not subjects of the same enmity of heart to God, and his truth? To this it may be replied, That it has never yet been argued, that their nature is less depraved, or that they are more inclined to the ways of the Lord than others; but, that these Scriptures decidedly declare for their salvation, by pronouncing them heirs of the gracious promises of a covenant God, interested in his peculiar favour, and ordained to eternal life. In answer to which, I am under the necessity of acknowledging, that if no better argument than this can be adduced to substantiate Infant Salvation, it is totally indefensible, and entirely out of my power to answer the proposed questions, on that favourable side, which affords such sweet consolation to tender mothers, by pronouncing their departed infants infallibly saved.—No: if the proof of their salvation depends upon such a vanishing phantom, floating in the brain of those, whose pity betrays them into error, oversteps the scriptural boundary of truth, and overstrains these passages of God's word, to make them speak what the Holy Ghost never intended: then, I say again, Infant Salvation is totally indefensible: it has not a foot to stand on, not a single argument to defend it, but must yet be undetermined with us, remaining in thick darkness, and perplexing uncertainty. The infant seed of believers all interested in the gracious coven-

ant! Then, why did *Esau* perish? why was he hated of the Lord, seeing he was born of religious parents? He *lived* to fill up his measure of sin, as all the *non-elected* do, and perished for ever!

The children intended in Acts ii. 39, are not infants; the Holy Ghost hath not left it unexplained; for it is immediately added, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise is, that those who are afar off among the Gentiles, shall be made nigh; and those among the Jews, who are included in the election of grace, shall be called of the Lord, whether infants or adults; not because they are the children of believers, but because they are interested in the distinguishing blessings of the covenant of grace. "For whom he did predestinate, them he also called;" Romans viii. 30. The Jews were, in this passage, positively told, that their children, that is, their progeny, who were of the election of grace, should be called; and, according to this promise, the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Romans xi. 7. But you will say, infants are undoubtedly intended in the other Scripture, 1 Corinthians vii. 14.; and are there, positively, said to be clean and holy: very true; but what kind of holiness is intended? The very same as the sanctification, or holiness, received by an unbelieving husband from a believing wife, or by an unbelieving wife, from a believing husband; neither of which proceeds from the Spirit of God, or have any thing whatever to do with

everlasting salvation ; for the unbelieving husband, remaining an unbeliever, cannot be sanctified by the Spirit, but is, notwithstanding, sanctified by the wife. Hence it is too evident to admit of any dispute, that, as the husband, or wife, who is a believer, is exhorted to continue with the other party, in order to effect this sanctification or holiness, that the apostle is here urging *connubial* and *conjugal holiness* ; for, “ Marriage,” saith he, in Hebrews xiii. 4. “ is honourable in all things, and the bed undefiled : but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge.”

Hence, children who are born in wedlock are holy and pure, not by nature, for it does not extend to the state of the soul : but, in point of parental conduct they are holy, that is, they are lawful children ; whereas an illegitimate child is pronounced unclean in this passage, on account of the unlawful and unclean intimacy of its parents, by whose conduct it is bastardized ; and, under the law, we know, that such a person was not admitted into the congregation of the Lord.

The Jews, inflated with pride that they were the natural Descendants of Abraham, made it a continual plea for their interest in the favour of God, and the ground of their right to every religious privilege. With this infatuation we find them coming to John for baptism ; but the good old Baptist, who was “ a burning and a shining

light," gave them to understand that they were building upon a sandy foundation: and that the saved seed of Abraham were not natural but spiritual. As many as be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, and are children of the promise; which blessing did not rest alone with the circumcised, but extends to the uncircumcised also, Therefore, he would not baptize them upon such a profession of faith, which led them no farther than to look to believing parentage for salvation, and to trust in a religious education. He boldly rejects them, and in Matthew iii. 9. thus faithfully warns them of their delusion: "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." Infants, therefore, cannot be saved on account of their religious parentage: for the children of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

3rd. Neither are they saved because they are baptized, or (rather) sprinkled with water; which can neither initiate them into the church of Christ, nor make them spiritual and regenerate. Although the *Priest* may say, upon sprinkling it, "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ;—and, this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of

Christ's church.*" Though the Priest may thus vainly pretend to regenerate the child by water, we are not bound to believe him; and, with the New Testament in our hands, it is impossible, while we enjoy our rational senses, and pay any kind of attention to that celestial volume.

What blindness and superstition must that be, which leads the parent of an infant to believe, that, should it die without *baptism*, it must, inevitably, perish for ever!

Hence the poor deluded mother, if her sickly infant appears to be near its dissolution, will exclaim, with all possible anxiety—*Send for the Parson, the child is dying*: as if its salvation entirely depended upon a few drops of water, sprinkled on its face by the hand of a Priest! and, perhaps, of a carnal Priest, whose conduct gives his profession the lie, and who is as ignorant of salvation by Christ as the deluded mother; being himself dead in trespasses and sins, at the very time he so solemnly professes to regenerate the child!

No idea can be farther from truth, or more unscriptural, fallacious, and superstitious! Baptism has no concern with salvation, nor any thing to do with regeneration; and much less with the initiation of members into the church of Christ.

* Vide the Baptism of Infants, in the Book of Common Prayer.

Baptism is not regeneration, neither is regeneration baptism. Baptism is, an ordinance of the Gospel, belonging to none but believers: which is not the washing of regeneration, nor "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" 1 Peter iii. 21. In which, as in the Supper, we discern the Lord's body. We, therein, behold a crucified Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection; and those who cannot discern the Lord's body in such a beautiful and solemn figure, have no business with baptism, as they would be sure to put it in an improper place, and to subvert it to a wrong end: for the invariable, and scriptural reply is, to all proposed candidates, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Acts viii. 37.

4th. Some advocates for Infant Salvation have attempted to carry their point, upon the hypothesis of Christ's having atoned for the original sin of all mankind: but, I must confess, that though their cause is good, their ground for argument is exceedingly unsafe; and, when brought before the Scriptures, will be found but a phantom, which will immediately disappear.

I dare not, therefore, presume to stand upon this ground in defence of the doctrine I have undertaken to establish; because it extends too far, and if it could prove any thing, would certainly prove too much: for, while it established Infant

Salvation, by an atonement particularly, and abstractedly for the original sin of all mankind, it would unavoidably prove, that the blood of Christ was shed for the original sin of those, who are now in hell; and, therefore, (horrid to assert!) must be shed in vain. Consequently, I reject this idea, as derogatory and degrading to the complete, and effectual atonement of Christ, and inimical to the glory of unalterable love.

Christ dying in vain, is an idea which the apostle evidently execrates with indignation, because it saps the very foundation of the redeemed church. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for, if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galatians ii. 21.

Neither do I, my dear friends, wish, in any way, to frustrate the grace of God, in order to establish the point in question; but, it is my desire, and a desire, which I am persuaded, will be accomplished, to stand in defence of Infant Salvation, upon such a firm, solid, good ground, as to bid defiance to every antagonist, ever to refute it, except they flatly and plainly deny the sacred Scriptures.

5th. The moment a child is born into the world, it is under the curse of the law, as a sinner, being originally polluted, apostatized from God, and dead in sin. Hence, I am obliged to conclude, that if infants are saved, they must be saved in

the same way with ourselves: entirely by the atonement of Christ; cleansed in his blood, justified in his righteousness, and renewed by his Spirit. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts iv. 12.) whether old or young, infants or adults.

The question then, is, are infants saved by Christ, or are they lost? What conclusion shall we draw? What saith the Scripture?

1st. If salvation is by the law, if heaven is merited by our good works, it is absolutely impossible they should ever arrive there, as they never live to perform any. But, though they do not live to perform any good works, or meritorious duties, as they are termed by some, it is, blessed be God, no objection to their salvation; no kind of impediment whatever to their being saved: because, salvation is not by the performance of the commands of the *old covenant*, but by the blessings, and privileges of a *better*, established in the heavens, firm as the immoveable and eternal throne of God. Psalm lxxxix. 2, 3, 4. *Not of works*, saith the apostle—Melodious sound! Heavenly tidings! The best news that ever reached the ears of poor perishing sinners! And, as we are saved intirely of free grace, without the deeds of the law, surely infants bid as fair for salvation as ourselves.

2nd. If the performance of what are commonly

denominated evangelical *terms* and *conditions*, is necessary to salvation, then infants *cannot* be saved. But as the love of God, in Christ, is never to be merited, but always flows spontaneously to his people—as he loves them freely, and receives them graciously—as he loved them before the foundation of the world, and when they lay in their sins, and in their blood.—Ezekiel xvi, 8, 9. Ephesians ii. 4.—their salvation must be entirely independent of such *terms* and *conditions*; which cannot, therefore, be any impediment in the way of Infant Justification.

3rd. If the doctrine of *progressive holiness* be a scriptural truth, and essential to the saint's glorification, then are infants in a most deplorable state, being for ever excluded those blessed abodes of felicity, and doomed to sink, irrecoverably, under the curse, most justly denounced, against sin and sinners.

But, my brethren, we have not so learned Christ. We are taught to know, most assuredly, that the *new man* is as *holy* the first moment that the Holy Ghost breathes Divine life into the soul, as when he leaves this world, to ascend to God. Regeneration is an immortal and incorruptible principle, the very life of the eternal God, the immaculate image of the gracious Saviour, formed in the soul; which cannot sin, because *born of God*: and, though the new man is first a babe, and has his juvenile days, and, therefore, certainly does in-

crease in the knowledge of God : growing “strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus ;” yet, his increasing knowledge does not exempt him from that opposition and plague, which he must ever meet with from the *old man*, while in this vale of sin and sorrow. So far is he from being exempt from the plague of sin, or from finding his *old man* any better, or in any respect whatever, *purified*, that he finds, by daily experience, he is still “ corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and that in him (that is, in his flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” As he grows in grace, he learns more than ever, with an holy detestation, to *abhor* himself, and to esteem his once-boasted righteousness, as “ *filthy rags* ;” to put no dependence upon himself, no confidence in the flesh. He rejoices alone in Christ Jesus, and esteems all things as dross and dung, for the excellency of the sweet delightful knowledge of his dear bleeding Lord ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and all the fulness of grace ! In whose hands are the jewels of the Lord, his redeemed sheep, and to whom all the glory of their salvation shall be ascribed for ever and for ever ! The very moment Christ proclaims his loving kindness to a sinner, he is meet for glory ; as a proof of it, the very moment that Christ graciously declared to the *Thief*, “ This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,” he was prepared to enter the joy of his Lord. We hear of no more preparation : he looked on his suffering Lord with believing eyes, and saw the streaming blood, which atoned for

his sins, and the righteousness wrought out, which completely covered his every imperfection. The vilest of sinners, thus looking unto Jesus, is enabled to say—

“ ’Midst flaming worlds, in these array’d,
With joy shall I lift up my head!”

For the leprosy is cleansed, the sinner is made whole, and Christ alone glorified in his salvation.

And has not Jesus the same power to proclaim, instantaneously, his loving kindness to the departing spirit of an Infant? Yes, blessed be God! for, as *sanctification* is not *progressive*, infants *are not* thereby excluded from the kingdom of God.

I shall now make a very necessary and serious inquiry: an inquiry, in which the glory of God, in his strict and adorable justice, is concerned! I would ask the advocates of Infant Damnation, Whether they have any solid proof, in the Inspired Writings, of such a melancholy doctrine? If they have not, let them well consider what they are doing, in charging God himself, without any evidence, with such merciless conduct towards Infants! It is really a serious matter; and we ought to have good evidence indeed, and that from the infallible Word of Truth, before we palm such a conduct upon the Almighty himself!

Suffer me, then, impartially, and with all possible solemnity, to repeat the question: Have we

any solid proof in the Scriptures, that an Infant ever perished, under the everlasting wrath of heaven? or, Is there any one passage, or any statement of facts, in the inspired Volume, from which we are authorized to draw such a melancholy inference? Hath the Lord, in any one part of his Word, positively asserted it? Hath he therein given us authority, positively to say, Infants are in hell? Can we meet with a Scripture that carries an implication, or that bears so much as the least resemblance, of such unprofitable doctrine? Can it be proved to be scriptural? Has it the broad basis of eternal truth for its establishment? If it has, upon a conviction thereof, I hope I shall be one of the first to embrace and defend it; but, if it has not, let me for ever condemn, and expose it, with all that warmth of zeal, which every antisciptural doctrine merits; and, while it has a single advocate upon earth, may the Lord give me both heart and tongue, loudly to declaim against it!

I am well aware of the reply, that persons on the opposite side of the question, would make to these solemn interrogations, which I am bound in conscience to propose, for the honour of God. I am in possession of their arguments, and have maturely, and impartially considered them; and, to my own comfort and satisfaction, have found them invalid, futile, and inconclusive. They would have recourse to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; and would ask, "Were there no

children in those populous cities? and were not the whole of the inhabitants, *young* and *old* (Lot and his family excepted) swept off, with the besom of destruction; suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire?" I must acknowledge, that it would be equally as absurd to argue, that there are no infants in this great Metropolis, as that there were none in those cities, who certainly fell, and, *as creatures*, suffered in the general calamity: but whether they fell under the wrath of God, to perish for ever, or whether their disembodied spirits ascended to God, is the inquiry we are bound, with impartiality, to make, in inspecting this popular and direful event. We are well assured, that, in a national calamity, God's people may be such sufferers, as to perish *corporeally*, at the same time that their departed spirits ascend, to dwell for ever with Christ. Though I do believe, that, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, *adults* all suffered the vengeance of *eternal* fire. But that those Infants who perished *corporeally* with them, are now happy with God, I have not the shadow of a doubt.

In examining that awful overthrow, it now becomes me to make it apparent, that it will not establish, or even countenance, Infant Damnation. We must have recourse to 2 Peter ii. 6. Jude ver. 7, and Genesis xviii. 20. ; which will prove, not only that Infant Damnation is not *implied* in that awful account, but that, to a certainty, no infant therein could suffer the everlasting vengeance of

God. The Apostle says, in 2 Peter ii. 6. "Making them an ensample unto those, that after should live ungodly." I have only, then to ask, Could Infants, who had neither time nor ability to live ungodly, become, in any sense, an *ensample* in this case? Impossible! Jehovah clears his own justice, by attributing the awful overthrow, to the base and abominable conduct of the inhabitants of those cities. Their *flagitious*, and unnatural crimes brought down upon them the fiery indignation of incensed justice; and they suffered very justly for their ungodly conduct: which never can be said of those who die in their infancy. To this *Jude* bears a corroborating testimony.

If it be asked, Who suffered the vengeance of eternal fire? the answer, according to *Jude*, verse 7, must be, "Those who gave themselves over to fornication, and who are set for an *example*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." In Genesis xviii. 20. the same cause of their overthrow is assigned, "And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." These Scriptures shine as clear as the noon day, with the most lucid proof, to assure us, that, in that awful day, *Infants*, though involved in corporeal destruction, were not cast into hell, but those only *who lived ungodly*; and, therefore, when the Lord, with much long

suffering, declared to *Abraham*, that, if ten righteous were found in those cities, he would spare the whole for the sake of those *ten*, he has no reference to *children*, but to *adults*; whose righteous conduct should distinguish them from the rest of the wicked inhabitants, whose sins cried up unto heaven: as in Ezekiel xviii. where the Lord speaks of a *practical* and *national* righteousness; and not of the imputed righteousness of Christ, in which all the seed of Israel, whether *Infants*, or *adults*, are justified, and shall glory.

Psalm cxxxviii. 8, 9, has been considered as ample proof of *Infant* Destruction: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and *dasheth thy little ones* against the stones." No doubt, this is a sufficient evidence of *Infant* Destruction; but whether of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, or whether of corporeal destruction only, will bear a particular inquiry; and I am persuaded, that, upon examination of the passage, the latter will be apparent to every impartial mind.

In the great and awful catastrophe of Babylon, the city of God's indignation, the melancholy end of their *little ones*, threatened in this passage, is, that of *dashing them against the stones*. And this is the fullest account we have of the destruction

of their *little ones* : which sentence was to be executed, not by the Lord himself, but by man; *Happy shall he be, &c.* Hence, I would ask, Is it in the power of a mortal to cast both soul and body into hell? can the sentence—Dashing them against the stones, be interpreted everlasting destruction? Impossible ! It is such an interpretation as cannot obtain with the judicious reader of God's Word ; and much less with any one, whose mind is divinely enlightened, to peruse the sacred Volume with pleasure and profit. As the punishment is *corporeal*, and the sentence is executed *on earth*, by the hands *of men*, we have no business to extend it any further ; and it would be absurd, indeed, to infer, from this bodily destruction, that their immortal souls perish ; for by a parity of reasoning, we might as well conclude, that all the *young Children*, who fell victims to the wrath and cruelty, of that monster of iniquity, *Herod*, sunk immediately in everlasting woe. We might even extend it farther, and conclude, that, as the Martyrs suffered *corporeal* punishment, and were cut off by the hands of men, they must, consequently, fall short of that salvation, which many of them exulted in, when encompassed by devouring flames ! How irrational would be such a conclusion ! and not more irrational than erroneous, and contrary to well attested truth.

But, if it is possible to state this in a more clear point of view, and to free this passage from the

gross charge of sentencing Infants to everlasting destruction, we will attempt it, by considering the eighth verse as exegetical of the ninth.

The Israelites address the Babylonians in this language : “ Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.” A retaliation is here predicted ; and the very affliction brought upon the Israel of God, by the Babylonians, was to return upon their own head. Then the question naturally arises, Had the Babylonians sent any of Israel’s infant progeny to hell? can any thing like it be implied? No: they had, by the sword of cruelty, put a period to their *earthly* existence, and it was the determination of heaven, to visit them with the same calamity.

Hence, it is undeniably plain, that not everlasting, but only *corporeal* destruction, is, in this passage, threatened to the *little ones of Babylon* ; I do, therefore, heartily rejoice, that it is in my power to say, positively, and defy any one to refute me ; that it does not contain even the shadow of a proof for Infant Damnation.

Is the death of any Infant narrated in the Word of God? and is the narrative favourable, or unfavourable to the everlasting happiness of Infants? One of the most remarkable accounts, upon sacred record, of a Child’s departure into the world of spirits, is that recorded in 2 Samuel xii. 22, 23. And David said—“ While the Child was yet

alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live! But now he is dead, wherefore shall I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

This passage has frequently been quoted as a positive proof of Infant Salvation, under a persuasion, that David had a direct reference to glory: and, by the sweetest anticipation of that world of felicity, joyfully exclaimed—*I shall go to him!* But the advocates for the other side of the question, have as positively asserted, that David has reference to nothing more than the grave: and as the Child was interred in the earth, with an eye to his own mortality, he said—*I shall go to him*; that is, I shall go to the *grave*. These are the contested expositions on this sentence. Though the *former* is certainly my warm opinion, I have not introduced the narrative as positive proof of Infant Salvation; because, independent of this, I can fully establish it by the most incontrovertible evidence.

Admitting that David had reference only to the grave, it does not prove the destruction of Infant souls; and, therefore, all the advantage our antagonists can derive from such explication, is only to deprive us of that indubitable evidence, which would immediately overthrow their every argument; for, if David was satisfied that his Child was in heaven, it must be upon the persua-

sion that all, dying in their infancy, safely arrive there; but they are very welcome to their comment upon this passage, and to take this formidable weapon out of my hand, as I have no doubt of being able to conquer without it; nevertheless, I am not willing to yield it without a contest. Let us, therefore, coolly and deliberately examine the passage, and ask—to what place David could have reference, when he rejoiced in anticipation of being with the deceased Child? could he have an eye to the grave? It does not appear from the narrative, that the Child was yet interred, for it appears, that he uttered these words almost immediately after its departure, and if so, he could not have a reference to the grave, *where the Child was not*; but for this I shall not contend, though it is certainly good ground for argument. I shall proceed to ask a more important, and decisive question:—Is it to be supposed that David would rejoice merely at a view of the grave, and in anticipation of being there with the *mortal remains* of the Child? would he rejoice at a view of the grave, abstractedly and separately considered? I admit, with pleasure, that believers, in all ages, have rejoiced at the thought of death; and, even in the arms of death, have triumphed over the vanquished grave: but, it has been when they were enabled to view them with all their collateral circumstances, appendages, and consequences; when their eye has been upon Christ, and they have rejoiced in prospect of a glorious resurrec-

tion to eternal life! But, to suppose that David looked no further than the gloomy grave, and yet to rejoice with such a sweet persuasion that he should enjoy the company of the Child, is, indeed, contrary to all scripture, experience, and common sense. Would he have rejoiced at merely going into the grave, where he should neither see the Child, nor in any way be sensible of his company; but, as a lifeless, and inanimate lump of clay, lie insensibly by his side? The idea is too gloomy for David's noble soul. It must, then, appear very clear, to those who will compare one part of the narrative with the other, that David's consolation sprung from a persuasion of seeing, and enjoying the company of the Child: which he could not on earth, for the Child was gone, nor in the grave, where the body is but lifeless clay; therefore, it is undeniably plain, that he had reference to eternal glory.

Having considered, and sufficiently obviated the principal arguments urged *against* Infant Salvation, as well as the false grounds upon which it has been pleaded by some well-intentioned, but mistaken men; I shall now go more immediately into the subject, and shew upon what ground it can be substantiated, so as to harmonize with distinguishing grace.

1st. I shall shew, from a description of the non-elect, that Infants cannot perish: for, as I have plenty of evidence to prove that they are not in-

cluded among them, it must stand as a stubborn and irrefutable fact, that they are of the *elect of God*; and, as such, eternal glory is their's.

As it is not my province, at this time, to prove the doctrine, the *sublime* doctrine, of Election, we shall take it for granted that it is a well authenticated truth, clearly laid down by the inspired Penmen, and upon the sure foundation of their election in Christ, make it apparent, even to those on the opposite side of the question, that dying Infants must be saved.

Let us enquire then—Do any of the non-elect die in their Infancy, or do they all live to fill up their measure of sin? That the latter is the fact—that they all live to be practical sinners, and are condemned for actual transgression, I think, can admit of no dispute. And, indeed, this is a point worthy of our attention: for if the non-elect never die in their infancy, then the dissolution of every Infant gives ample testimony of its election to grace and glory; and I am firmly persuaded, that a scriptural statement of the conduct of those who perish in their sins, and the many visible marks of their reprobation, will tend very much to settle the subject in dispute: nay, it is enough to make prejudice itself retract the sting of venomous irrationality, to hear with due attention, and to acknowledge that truth is on that pleasing side of the question, on which I have now the happiness to plead.

If then, my brethren, I can prove, that all the non-elect, or, in other words, all who sink for ever under the divine displeasure, are *adults*, and that the commission of sin always most prominently marks their character, surely I shall have a right to claim the honors of a victory obtained over our opponents: because, in this case, we shall have all the evidence we need, to establish, beyond the power of contradiction, the consolatary truth for which I contend.

The first observation then that I have been led mentally to make, and which, I presume to say, highly merits your attention, is the striking representation of their character, recorded in Romans i. 28. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," &c. It would be even an insult to common sense to suppose, that an Infant is capable of answering this character, as it is absolutely out of its power to perpetrate these nefarious crimes; and therefore, we cannot but conclude, to the glory of divine justice, that a dying Infant's departing spirit never thus fell a victim to the hot displeasure of heaven. Moreover, the non-elect are said,

1st. To be *blinded*, "But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Romans xi. 7. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest

the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 4.

If the god of this world, fearful that the gospel should shine on them, and that they should be converted from the error of their ways, does thus, through divine permission, *blind* the non-elect, then Infants are not to be classed with them, because they are, in every respect, incapable of hearing, and attending with the outward ear, to the ministry of the gospel. If we, then, ask the question, Who are blinded? the answer is, *the rest*. And, if we farther ask, Who are we to understand by the rest? the reply unavoidably follows, *the non-elect*, the remainder, all and every one of those who are left to themselves, and from whom the Lord hath selected his jewels; but children are incapable of being thus blinded by error and seduction, and, therefore, are not included in the reprobate number of *the rest*; and as the term *the rest*, takes in all, except the elected jewels of the Lord, then Infants must be numbered with those jewels, and shall dwell in glory with them for ever.

2nd. The non-elect are subjects of strong delusions: believe a lie, and take pleasure in unrighteousness; 2 Thessal. ii. 12. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." We then enquire, who shall be *damned*? This scripture in-

forms us, those who take pleasure in unrighteousness, and those only; but, as Infants have not ability either to commit acts of unrighteousness, or to partake of such diabolic pleasure; the conclusion is unavoidable—*Infants cannot be damned!* and, as there is no intermedium between damnation and salvation, it is hereby reduced to a most incontrovertible and indubitable certainty—That Infants, departing this life in their Infancy, **MUST BE SAVED!**

3rd. The non-elect shall all do wickedly: Daniel xii. 10. “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” Who shall perish without understanding? Those who are left to *do* wickedly, and are, from the most abominable traits of character, emphatically denominated — *the wicked*. Is this descriptive of departing Infants? Can an “Infant of an hour old” characteristically exhibit such shocking marks of human depravity? shall such an Infant, then, perish without understanding? No: if we once more put the question — Who shall never understand the mysteries of redeeming love? Directed by this unerring scripture, we are obliged to give the following answer: —None of the wicked shall understand. Then it unavoidably follows, that, as Infants are excluded this description, they must be included in the number of those who shall be saved; and, as such, shall have the knowledge of salvation communi-

cated instantaneously to their departing souls, by HIM, with whom all things are possible; and who is able, in a moment to expand their immortal faculties with a knowledge of HIMSELF, unaided by carnal reason.

Infants purified in the blood of Christ, are taken from this vile world in infinite mercy, while the non-elect all live to fill up their measure of sin, and cannot escape the damnation of hell! Thus the Lord of life and glory, addressed the hypocritical Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 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?" The state and character of the non-elect, thus most powerfully answers the first question on that favorable and delightful side, which is to the glory of divine justice and mercy! and not less forcible are those arguments adducible,

2nd. From the nature of hell: For it is impossible for a soul that never committed sin to enter there. Hell is a place of punishment where guilty immortals lie under the pressure of divine wrath, tormented with the worm of their own conscience, that is for ever gnawing with the bitterest accusations; and where the blackest despair shutteth them in for ever! For a description of hell read Psalms ix. 17. xi. 6. and Isa. xxxiii. 14.

In the first, Psalm ix. 17. the Psalmist is di-

rected to describe the character of such as shall for ever dwell in those gloomy regions, in the following striking language: "The wicked shall be turned into hell: and all the nations that forget God!"

If the wicked, and those that forget God, are the only companions of devils, in their dismal cells of despair, it is impossible for an Infant to perish, because it cannot answer to the character of the inhabitants of hell. Psalm xi. 6. thus describes their perpetual torments:—"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. Storms of fiery wrath are continually beating upon their guilty souls; which is their just and rightful *portion*; having merited it by their crimes, and which is the righteous judgment of God:" for the righteous Lord, addeth the Psalmist, "loveth righteousness;" and it is only for practical transgression that he can *righteously* condemn. But, as a Child, departing in Infancy, cannot be practically wicked, God cannot justly consign its immortal soul to that place where hope never comes. This every child of God, who has been under the condemnation of the law, in his conscience can testify. Were you not obliged to justify God in your own condemnation, at the same time that the enmity of your heart burned hot against him? Indeed you had hell in your conscience, till Christ made his glorious appearance, and delivered you from going down to the

pit, having found a ransom for your souls, even his own life! The *practical* hypocrite, with all his hypocrisy, and the painted Pharisee, with all his outside shew of goodness, shall for ever sink under the hot displeasure of the Lord, as his avowed enemies, for their black crimes, in opposing his truth, profaning his ways, and persecuting his people. This is strikingly described in Isaiah xxxiii. 14. “The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”

3dly, Infant Salvation is proveable from the nature of the *final judgment*. When Jesus shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe—when the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, shall call all nations from under ground, to “see the Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance rolling before him!” When this tremendous day shall arrive, it is never, in scripture, asked—Where shall those who died in their Infancy appear? there is no doubt of their happy situation at the right-hand of the gloriously tremendous Judge: But it is asked, Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? those, who, like the inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, lived ungodly, and died in their sins. Their damnation is inevitable: but mark the procedure of the righteous judge of all the earth. He does not condemn without charging their

crimes upon them: but that his righteousness may be *exalted* in the sentence of their condemnation, and that his justice may shine with tremendous lustre in their everlasting punishment, he recognises and repeats their shameful crimes.

Read the fiftieth Psalm, and the latter part of Matthew xxv.:—"But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?—These things *hast thou done*, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

After a rehearsal of their *crimes*, he clears his own justice, by setting them in order before their eyes; and, while he tears them in pieces, "and there is none to deliver," calls the severity a just *reproof*. Matt. xxv. 41—46, is in complete harmony with this Psalm: "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." But why depart from him? what charge does he bring against them? He proceeds: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink," &c.; and, after particularly pointing out their character and conduct, he justly proceeds to banish them from his presence, as *workers* of ini-

quity. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." It is then, undeniably clear, that, though *Infants* are equally as depraved, and by nature as sinful as *adults*, as the Lord, in the general judgment, will call over a catalogue of practical crimes, and sentence them as *workers of iniquity*; children, not living to commit those crimes, cannot be numbered with those who are condemned; and, therefore, as cleansed from all pollutions by the blood of Christ, saved, and pardoned by divine grace, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they must appear at the right-hand of JEHOVAH JESUS.

I have answered the first question, upon the most substantial ground; having, by a close adherence to scripture, inquired after the mind and will of God upon the subject; and, with every one who allows of biblical decision, have, no doubt, satisfactorily proved the Salvation of those who die in their Infancy. I shall, therefore, proceed to the investigation of the second question.

"Is an Infant of an hour old, capable of a knowledge of its interest in the covenant of grace?"

But, before we enter upon the discussion of an Infant's capability of knowing its interest in the gracious covenant, it is highly necessary to enquire, at what age a child is to be considered an *Infant*.

In law, I believe, all young persons, under the age of twenty-one, are denominated Infants. But that will not stand good in *divinity*.

The origin of the word *Infant* confines it to a Child that *cannot speak*: being derived from the Latin, *in*, contrary to; and *fari*, to speak. Then, by an *Infant*, we are to understand a young Child, whose natural capacity is not expanded to a due use, and exercise of its rational faculties. As foliage in the spring, is bound up in the bud, till expanded by growth, so are the reasoning powers of man, in the bud of Infancy, fast bound, and incapable of rational exercise, till ripened and expanded by years and cultivation; and, as in the vegetative world, there are a diversity of plants and flowers; some that continue long in the bud, others that as quickly expand, and make their appearance; so, in the rational world, the natural capacity of some children ripens at a very early period, while others more advanced in juvenile years, continue incapacitated, and incapable of exercising their rationality. So, that, respecting years, we cannot fix any determinate bounds to Infancy.

But it is not particularly my business to enquire this night, to what age Infancy extends, or who we are to consider an Infant: this the Quærist himself hath settled, by calling my attention to an Infant of an hour *old*. So that by an Infant we understand a little helpless Babe, that is

incapable of reasoning; that is, a temporary *idiot*, in whom, natural conscience does not yet perform its office—a little Child who knows not *good* from *evil*.

Methinks that many of my auditors are ready to vociferate the question, and exclaim—Can an Infant know God? Can an Infant have an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ? Can an Infant pray, and receive answers of love? Can an Infant worship God? Can an Infant have such a knowledge as to be sure that sin is pardoned? Yes, Sirs; and, as all things are possible with God, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say, that a child, even in its mother's womb, under the gracious tuition of the Spirit, is capable of rejoicing in the God of Salvation; and I not only assert the possibility of it, but hope to prove it a heavenly reality, that a Child in the womb has known, and rejoiced in Christ; which, when once proved, will stand as an affirmative answer to the question, never to be refuted—That a Child of an *hour old* is capable of a knowledge of its interest in the covenant of grace. But to prove this I have only to ask—Have I satisfactorily, and fully answered the first question? is it proved, to a certainty, that all who die in their Infancy are heirs of glory? This I have been enabled to state, in such a clear light, as, without ostentation, or any breach of modesty, boldly to bid defiance to refutation, as the scriptures are altogether on my side. Then, as Infants are the heirs of glory, and

all the heirs of glory "*shall be taught of God*," it unavoidably follows, that all Infants, dying in their Infancy are blessed with his gracious tuition, and are born again. "For except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But, clear and evident as this decision is, I shall yet pursue the investigation of the subject, and, shew, that it is not only possible, but an easy work with the Lord, to regenerate the soul of an Infant, though only an *hour old*.

It may be argued against me, that, as an Infant is incapable of exercising its *reasoning* powers, it can have no comprehension of the things of God: To which I reply,

Human, or carnal reason, is, by no means, an auxiliary to the knowledge of God. I speak particularly to you who are spiritual, and ask—Was it by the dint of *reasoning*, or argument powerfully playing upon your own *rational* faculties, that you were brought to a knowledge of Christ? or was it by the power of the Spirit of God, who, in his divine agency, brought home, with invincible energy, and all-conquering influence, those spiritual things which the *natural* man cannot receive? Those delightful things which the carnal man, with all his natural and acquired abilities, and with the most exalted *reason*, and the most shining talents in the world, cannot, in the least, even discern? Say, O ye highly favored Saints of the Most High! to which are you to ascribe the

glory, that you discern, embrace, and love those delightful things; to your own *reasoning powers*, or to the Holy Ghost?

Methinks, with one united, and exulting voice, you are ready to reply—"Not unto us, not unto our blind carnal reason; but to the blessed Spirit, be the honour and glory, that we believe, and receive that truth, which the world cannot receive, nor even discern!"

Indeed, my beloved friends, reason, in its most exalted and cultivated state, is so far from being an auxiliary in regeneration, that it is a stubborn enemy to it! In the reception of God's truth, it is one of the most powerful enemies we have to encounter: for it exalteth itself against God, and is saying—"I will be like the Most High:" like the reasoning Greeks, it esteems the cross of Christ *foolishness*: it is enmity itself to God; and, therefore, I am persuaded, the Lord, never employed this enemy as an assistant in the great work of regeneration.

This enemy to gospel truth must be brought down, and the Lord alone exalted, "who leadeth the blind in the way that he knoweth not," before ever a sinner can embrace the gospel. As a proof of this, read 1 Cor. i. 21.: "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." 1 Cor. ii.

14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Let Paul tell his miraculous conversion, (and not less miraculous is the conversion of every sinner) and *carnal reason* will, with the most consummate contempt, immediately exclaim—"Paul, thou art beside thyself!" while humble faith believes, that "all things are possible with God," sits at the feet of Christ for instruction, and triumphs in the mysteries of the cross.

Proclaim the union of Christ and his church, the union of the divine, and human nature in his adorable person, the imputation of our sins to him, and all the glorious mysteries of his cross; and, added to this—Declare concerning man, that he is dead in sin, and describe how the Spirit quickens him, strips him of all his supposed goodness, and brings him, without either wisdom, righteousness or strength, as a poor helpless sinner to Christ, and cleanses his conscience from sin in his precious blood.

Proclaim these sublime doctrines in the ears of boasted reason, and it will not only ask—"How can these things be?" but spurn at them, with all that enmity which the carnal mind has against God!

2nd. If then, human reason, as I have evi-

dently proved, is, instead of an auxiliary, an hindrance, an *enemy* to regeneration, and at enmity with God and truth, may I not boldly assert, that it is as much a miracle, for God to regenerate a sinner, of *forty* or *fifty* years of age, as a young Child of only an hour old; and, in order to stand my ground in support of this hypothesis, I shall argue,

2, That a sinner of that age, unrenewed in the image of his mind, knows no more of God, in reality, than an Infant. The one is as ignorant as the other; and this, in spite of carnal reason, every Child of God shall be brought to confess, when converted, and become as *little children*; and shall be made willing to acknowledge, that they are equally as ignorant, as weak, and as destitute of spiritual knowledge, as an Infant of an *hour old*. As a triumphant proof of it, I shall have recourse to Eph. iv. 18. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19. "Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness. The scripture proves, that he is dead to God, dark in his understanding, bound in the chains of ignor-

ance, and equally as blind in his mind to spiritual objects, as Sampson was to natural ones, after he had lost his sight. Where, then, is his superiority in spiritual understanding to an Infant of an hour old? In spiritual things, he is totally blind, dark, ignorant, and dead. Can an Infant be more? I know of no difference between them, except, that the Infant has no carnal *reason* to oppose the blessed Spirit in the new creation, whereas in the *adult* sinner, it is continually hostile to the work of God!

O then, what a miracle of regenerating grace is it, for such a proud, rebellious sinner to be brought low at the feet of Christ, and to be clothed in his right mind! There to renounce all pretensions to spiritual understanding, to acknowledge himself a fool, and to look unto Jesus, the fountain of wisdom, to be made wise unto salvation?

But a formidable objection may here be started, by some of my auditory; who may be ready to say, "*An Infant has no ears to hear the gospel.*" Is it necessary? I am persuaded not: for while I admit with pleasure, that the Lord is pleased, more generally, to bless his preached word, in bringing his people to a knowledge of himself, I must contend, that regeneration is entirely by the internal operation of the Holy Spirit: and, in that case, it is as easy for him to work *without* the outward means, as *with* them. For how often is it the case with a believer, that he

hears the gospel in its purity, with approving judgment, while his heart remains unmoved as a stone, and as cold as ice ! On the other hand, when he is not under the sound of the preached gospel, nor attending to any of the ordinances of Christ, the Lord is pleased to pay him a love-visit; and his soul is made like the chariots of Amminadib, mounting up as on the wings of eagles, with faith and love to a covenant God!

This proves that the Lord not only quickens whomsoever he will, but *when* he pleases; and, that we may not ascribe his glory to another, nor, idolatrously put his ministers and ordinances on *his* throne, he teaches us to know that he can, if he please, work entirely without them.

Be assured, that we are indebted to the Holy Ghost for every drop of spiritual comfort we enjoy; and, therefore, who will presume to deny such a self-evident fact, that it is as easy for him to proclaim salvation to the soul of a sinner, *without* either the written or preached word, as by making use of them? And that he has been pleased thus to magnify his sovereign prerogative, is gloriously exemplified in the conversion and regeneration of *Saul of Tarsus*; afterwards Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. What a marvellous instance of distinguishing grace ! And HE, who thus instantaneously revealed his loving kindness to Paul, no doubt (as Infants are evidently saved) does, in the same instantaneous manner, reveal

himself to the Infant's departing spirit. Though it cannot hear with the outward ear, it is "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." The blessed Spirit can as easily work faith in the heart of an Infant, as in the heart of an adult: seeing *faith* is not of ourselves, but the free gift of God !

Is the work of regeneration natural, or supernatural? Are the natural powers rectified, and put into a proper channel (as some tell us) or is it an entirely new creation? I am informed, by one who was divinely inspired to write, "That if any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creature;" (2 Cor. v. 17.) The old man, the body, and the law of sin, remains the same.

Carnal nature is not sanctified and made better: regeneration is the workmanship of the Spirit of God, (Eph. ii. 10.) distinct from our polluted nature, and opposite to it. (Gal. v. 17.) This divine nature, this heavenly principle of soul, this glorious image of Christ, created in the soul by the Holy Ghost, being distinct from carnal nature, cannot require the assistance of any of the natural powers of man to create and establish it; and, were such assistance ever so necessary, it would be impossible, as our carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. Hence it is undeniable, that the Holy Comforter can, with as much facility regenerate the soul of an Infant, and thereby give it a know-

ledge of it's interest in the covenant of grace, as the soul of a sinner fifty years of age: for it is,

1. *Divine illumination*, by which the soul discerns spiritual things; and looks unto Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And this light a Child may possess when it has no capacity for natural things.

2. It is *divine life* in Christ, and derived entirely from him. Eph. ii. 1. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." It is an easy thing with God thus to animate the Infant's soul, and give it the most lively sensibility of its interest in the covenant.

3. It is the *love of God* shed abroad in the heart. Rom. v. 5. "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

To love him who is *invisible* is inconsistent with carnal reason. All the faculties of soul, by which man is distinguished from the *brute*, can never extend to this, without regeneration: but, when this love is shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost, a Child is as capable of loving Christ as an adult. For the soul dearly loves him who is *invisible*, not from rational perception, but

from the testimony of the Spirit. 1 Peter i. 8, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Communion with God, which is the peculiar privilege, and supremest delight of the heaven-born soul, does not require the exertion of human reason. Such is the elevated nature, and divine sublimity of fellowship with Deity, that, though it is by no means incompatible with our reasoning powers, soars as far beyond them, as the heavens are above the earth. It is glory begun below! Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, conversing in covenant relationship with a covenant Child: saying, in sweeter accents than the carnal ear ever heard, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" And the adopted Child replying, with appropriating faith, filial fear, overcoming affection, abounding joy, and ineffable delight, ABBA, FATHER!"

This sweet communion can as easily be enjoyed by an infant as an adult; who, though it cannot articulate with the natural organ of speech, so as to be heard by its fellow-mortals, is capable of crying, with all its immortal powers expanded, "*My Father ! my Father !*"

For our communion with God is *spiritual*, and our conversation with him *internal*; being the language of the heart. 1 John i. 3. "Truly our

fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." God can and does teach *idiots*, and, in a rational sense, a Child cannot be considered in a more weak and incapacitated state. Indeed the greatest part of God's people are so far from possessing great natural and acquired abilities, to enable them to comprehend the mysteries of the Gospel, that we find, in the Scriptures, when compared with the *literati*, who can boast of a more exalted capacity, and literary privileges, that they are called *fools* and *babes*. Jesus, rejoicing over his own redeemed people, said, "I thank thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth! because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew xi. 25.

And, in sweet union with this, Paul says, (1 Corinthians i. 26, 27.) "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty." And not only those who are illiterately foolish shall be guided into all truth; but the Lord has absolutely promised, in Isaiah xxxv. 8. that "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Hence it is evident, that the natural incapacity and ignorance of an Infant, is no bar to its tuition in the celestial lessons of saving grace.

Are not all things possible with the Lord? Shall we call in question his all-creating and uncontrollable power? The question is, “*Is an Infant of an hour old capable of a knowledge of its interest in the covenant of grace?*” to which I reply, Has not the Lord power to give it such a knowledge? Has he not power to regenerate its immortal spirit? Is an unregenerate sinner, arrived to years of maturity, more capable of such a knowledge than an Infant? If so, what constitutes his capability? or, is he not as incapable as an Infant? And if they are naturally upon an equality in incapability, is it not as easy for the Lord to regenerate the one as the other?

Let the advocates for Infant Damnation answer these questions, and come to a determinate decision upon them, before they peremptorily affirm their unscriptural and execrable sentiments!

To this it may be replied, “We doubt not the power of God, to effect the great work of regeneration in their souls.” Admitting this, you grant me every thing I can ask for upon the question. Because, as no adult is capable of such a knowledge, without the exertion of DIVINE POWER, the answer to the question follows in course: “*Is an Infant capable?* &c. Yes, equally as capable as an *adult*; for as an adult cannot possess such a knowledge without a miraculous interposition of *Divine* power, and God is able to exert that power in the soul of an Infant, then the one is as capable as the other.

But it may be continued: "Though we doubt not the power of God to regenerate an Infant, we would ask, Does he so regenerate them? Are they taught of God?" To which I reply: As I have sufficiently proved, from the Scriptures, the *Salvation* of Infants; and we are well assured, that, whether Infants or adults, all who are thus graciously saved *shall be taught of God*, we have the most indubitable right to conclude, that expiring Infants certainly are regenerated, and made new creatures in Christ.

If, when the great Redeemer was born in the Stable, Deity itself could dwell in a Babe, wrapped in swaddling bands, and laid in the manger, why should we call in question the power of God, to reveal himself to the soul of a departing Infant?

And, as a proof that he does, read Isaiah lxxv. 20.—Luke i. 44.—Jeremiah i. 5.—Isaiah says, "For the Child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed."

The Child dying an *hundred years old*, cannot be understood *naturally*, but mystically: for it dies a *Child*, and, therefore, must be of a *tender age*. Nevertheless, it is advanced, in spiritual wisdom, to the age of a *new* man in Christ: illuminated with that maturity of spiritual know-

ledge, by which it triumphs in free grace; and is taken into the world of felicity, where uncontaminated comfort perpetually abounds; and where ineffable delights, flowing from the Redeemer's love, blossom in unfading bloom! The next Scripture proves, not only that an Infant of an *hour old*, but even an Infant in the womb, has rejoiced in God's salvation.

The Salutation of Mary, not only caused Elizabeth herself to rejoice, but she declares, that the Babe, with which she was pregnant, also *rejoiced* in her womb. Luke i. 44.—“For lo, as soon as the voice of thy Salutation sounded in mine ears, the Babe leaped in my womb for joy.” It may, probably, be argued, that the *joy* which her own soul experienced, had such a physical effect, as to cause the Babe to *leap in her womb*, which is a common case: but, if the Babe's *leaping*, was nothing more than what is *usual, general, and common*, why should she so particularly notice it?

But, be it observed, that she not only said, the Babe *leaped*: but, “the Babe leaped *for joy*.” She does not even so much as mention her own *joy*, but the *joy of the Babe in the womb*. Then, suffer me to ask, What joy could this unborn Infant experience? We are well assured, that all joy springs from the knowledge, or enjoyment, of something that is peculiarly pleasurable and grateful to the mind. Hence it stands evidently

proved, that nothing short of a knowledge of the Saviour's *coming*—that the time was near at hand, when the Messiah should make his glorious appearance, and bring salvation unto his people, created that joy in the unborn Infant; and, I have no doubt, but the Babe was in perfect unison with Mary and Elizabeth, in magnifying the Lord, and rejoicing in God the Saviour.

The last Scripture, Jeremiah i. 5. informs us of the Prophet's Sanctification in the womb. It is true, that, as they are blameless in Christ, all God's people are, when in the womb, sanctified; but, in this Scripture, more is evidently intended: for the *very act* of sanctification took place in the womb.—“*Before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee;*” and the Spirit's work, in sanctification, is always accompanied with the *knowledge* of Christ.

Then, we may not only conclude, that an Infant is *capable*, under the Divine tuition, of receiving a knowledge of covenant grace, but that Infants have been so taught of God; and, as all Infants, who die in their Infancy, are, no doubt, interested in the gracious covenant, the question is fairly answered—*they are all taught of God*—renewed in the image of their minds, and taken from all evil, through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, to that *everlasting rest*, which is the free and unmerited *gift of God*.

The True Sabbath.

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF
A SERMON,

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD-STREET,
MAY 27, 1810.

ISAIAH LVIII. 13, 14.

“IF THOU TURN AWAY THY FOOT FROM THE SABBATH, FROM DOING THY PLEASURE ON MY HOLY DAY, AND CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT, THE HOLY OF THE LORD, HONOURABLE, AND SHALT HONOUR HIM, NOT DOING THINE OWN WAYS, NOR FINDING THINE OWN PLEASURE, NOR SPEAKING THINE OWN WORDS; THEN SHALT THOU DELIGHT THYSELF IN THE LORD.”

EVERY particle of Sacred Truth is not only desirable, but when communicated, infinitely, and everlastingly precious to the children of God. They receive the truth in the *love of it*, which maketh them free from sin and condemnation, and through which they are sanctified. The most ardent, fervent, and pathetic Address, ever offered up before the Throne of our God, contains this excellent petition, “Father, sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is Truth.” This petition was heard, and received with ineffable delight, by a covenant Father, who has, and will answer it in

all ages, to the end of time ; by sending the Spirit of truth to guide his people into all truth. And as his Word is truth, every part of it, not only merits the attention, but shall obtain the most unbounded, and pleasurable approbation of all those, who are guided into its delightful spirituality, by this gentle, divine, and unerring guide, *The HOLY COMFORTER*.

If, then, every particle of Truth, every ray of Divine information, and every part of God's Word, so far as opened, and explained by experience, is precious to God's people, surely, I may say, without hesitation, the scripture selected for discussion, and the glorious subject it contains, must be deeply interesting to all those who delight themselves greatly in the Lord, and who, consequently, make his Sabbath, his holy day, their heartfelt *pleasure*.

This is a part of God's precious truth, a passage in his sacred Word, with which we must not, in any instance, trifle—A passage, in which he addresses his own regenerated people, who know and love his Gospel ; and therefore is indisputably worthy of their most serious consideration, and deliberate attention—A passage, upon the ground of which a variety of enquiries will arise, in the spiritually contemplative mind—What is the Sabbath? Are we to regard it under the Gospel dispensation? If so, How is it to be kept? Where is the possibility of keeping it, agreeable to the strict

injunction in the text? Is there any man, or any set of men whatever, who thus keep the Holy Sabbath?

In answer to such enquiries, I must insist, that the Sabbath must be kept, and scrupulously observed, according to the Divine injunction, or our salvation is rendered impossible. I am not afraid to say, that the man who does not keep the Sabbath according to the text, according to *every part* of it, must perish for ever! To say you keep the Sabbath *as well as you can*, is to assert a glaring absurdity, altogether unworthy the christian character, impeachable of Divine purity, and shamefully dishonourable to our All-wise Legislator! Shall he give laws, subject to your corrections, alterations, and mutilations! O ye, who pretend to keep the Sabbath *as well as you can*! I demand of you what authority you have to alter, abbreviate, change, and mutilate the Holy Sabbath! Who gave you authority to say, that the Lord will accept of your *imperfect* obedience, (to use your own phrase) in substitution of that spotless perfection which the commandment requires? “Remember that thou keepest HOLY the Sabbath Day;” or, according to my text, thou shalt not do thine own ways, find thine own pleasure, nor speak thine own words, on the Lord’s Holy Sabbath; and except the command is thus fulfilled, you must perish eternally! Away with your *imperfect* obedience! for by such imperfections your sacrifice is converted to sin, and your pretended righteous-

ness stands abhorrent in the eyes of him, who cannot look upon the least sin but with eternal indignation!

But, on the other hand, from the greatest authorities, and by the most lucid and unquestionable evidences, I can prove that the children of God, who know, and feel his saving power, in every respect answer to this delightful description of the Sabbath, in their experience and conduct, and “delight themselves in the Lord.”

I have observed, with sorrow, mingled with astonishment, that, clearly as it is stated in the Sacred Volume, it has been a subject of debate and disputation, among some of God’s children! And as it is my most ardent wish, and peculiar pleasure, to see them walking together in unity—and, added to this, the misrepresentations, and erroneous statements, circulated in the world, of my sentiments on the Sabbath—I am brought to a determination, as the Lord shall enable me, to lay before the Public a *scriptural* view of the subject: which, however contemned by Truth’s inveterate foes, founded on the Word of the Lord, must stand for ever irrefutable!

The word SABBATH, means *Rest*. “On the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made; and he *rested* on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day, and *sanctified* it.” (Genesis ii.

2, 3.) This is the first, and a very early account, that we have of a *Sabbath*, or a *Day of Rest*; on which, we are given to understand, Jehovah himself *rested*. Not that we are to suppose him weary, or faint, like ourselves, after extraordinary exertions, but that he *rested*, that is, ceased from his works of creation, having finished them, and pronounced them *Good*. Which, according to the Apostle's improvement of the subject, was beautifully typical of that sweet cessation from legal labour, which the christian experiences, who is brought to Jesus; that *REST*, or *SABBATH*, which remaineth for the people of God. "For we which have believed, do enter into *Rest*—For he that is entered into his Rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Hebrews iv. 3—11.)

Second. The Lord instituted the Jewish Sabbath, more particularly, and expressly, when he gave them his Holy Law, on Mount Sinai. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work," &c. (Exodus xx. 8.)

And be it particularly noticed, and for ever remembered, by the advocates for a legal and formal observance of the *Sabbath*, that the *Seventh* day, not the *first*, nor the *sixth*, nor any other, but the *seventh* day, is expressly enjoined to be kept

holy ; which is repeated in Exodus xxxi. 16, 17, with a particular reason assigned, why the *seventh*, above all others, should be so holily observed. “ Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath, throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the *seventh* day he rested, and was refreshed.”

It was evidently intended as a memorial of the completion of creation's works, and, spiritually, of the great work of Redemption and Salvation, given to Jesus *to perform* ; in the *completeness* of which, believers should find spiritual and everlasting *Rest*. *Seven*, in scripture, is a complete number, and our Sabbath, dear believers, consists in that completeness which we possess in him, who has finished the work which the Father gave him to do. (John xvii. 4.)

Then if it is the determination of some professors, to observe one day above the rest, why do they not observe the *seventh* ? for while they take the Law of Ten Commands for their *Rule of Life*, in religious concerns, they violate that rule they profess to walk by, and break that Sabbath they so zealously contend for, by observing a day the Lord never appointed, and neglecting that which he has

so particularly specified, sanctified, and set apart, in his Holy Law.

In the due performance of this command, let them further observe, that the Lord hath said, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, thyself, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor the cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." Ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? If you would keep the Sabbath holy, it is not only indispensably necessary to be inactive, and to *rest from all MANNER OF* work yourselves, but *all within your gates*. You must do nothing yourselves, you must have nothing done for you; every culinary office must totally be laid aside, no fire must be kindled in your houses, nor cattle employed for your service or pleasures. And added to this, you must not *speak your own words*, not converse,—and as the law takes cognizance of thoughts, not even *think*, upon any thing earthly, nor pursue your own pleasures. O ye pleasure-taking professors, where is the consistency of your pleading for the observance of that Sabbath, which you so often pollute by your visits, or *tea-parties* at home, on that very day, which is, thereby, rendered more laborious to servants, than all the days in the week!

As a proof of that Sabbatical purity which the law requires, read Exodus xxxv. 3; Nehemiah xiii. 19; Jeremiah xvii. 20; where you will find

both example and precept for what you *must do*, if you would keep the *Sabbath* holily; and where, if the Lord should be pleased to open your eyes, you will see that with all your zeal for the Sabbath, you are *Sabbath-breakers* yourselves! Exodus xxxv. 3. "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the *Sabbath* Day." Nehemiah xiii. 19. "And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark, before the *Sabbath*, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gate, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath-day." Jeremiah xvii. 20. "Thus saith the Lord, take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem."

I have thus clearly proved what the law of God says of the Sabbath; and what must be attended to, strictly, according to the Ten Commands, which you call your rule of religious life, in order to keep the *Sabbath*: the sum of which is, No burden must be carried; no cattle used; no servant employed; no fire kindled; no gate, nor door opened; no evil word spoken; no evil thought exercised nor felt! If all these things are duly and truly performed by you, I shall consider you *Sabbath-keepers*; but, upon the least violation of any one of them, I have good authority to pronounce you SABBATH-BREAKERS, and that you are cursed

by that very law, which you contend for as your Rule of Life! (Galatians iii. 10.)

Having considered the *Sabbath* in a legal point of view, I shall proceed to “shew unto you a more excellent way,” by proving, that as Christ is the end of the Law, the Sabbath being a part of that law, he must, unavoidably, be the end of the Jewish *Sabbath*, and himself the Sabbath of all real believers, who are led by the Spirit, to keep it in the strictest conformity with the contents of my text.

The Sabbath was typical of Jesus, and that celestial rest, which a believer delightfully enjoys in him. Therefore, in an evangelical sense, every spiritual man keeps the Lord's Sabbath, and calls it his supremest, and most ineffable delight. Christ is certainly in this text. It abounds with the most lively descriptions of his glories, and the abundance of grace, mercy, and peace, perpetually flowing from him, like a river, with broad streams, watering, reviving, refreshing, and keeping alive, the believing soul, which most satisfactorily finds, in him, a delightful cessation from labour; an everlasting rest—a Sabbath indeed! For, Who does a real believer esteem, venerate, and adore, as the “**HOLY OF THE LORD, HONOURABLE, and his chiefest DELIGHT**, but a precious JESUS?” And is not this the substance of the text? Then, our infinitely precious Jesus must be, incontestibly, the believer's TRUE SABBATH; which he keeps, and “de-

lights himself in the Lord." How very frequently, and emphatically, is Jesus denominated *The Holy of the Lord*—*The Holy One of Israel*, throughout the *Old Testament*; and several times in the *New*. And has not the Lord prohibited ascriptions of honour to another?—"My glory," saith he, "I will not give to another"—"That all men *honour* the Son, even as they honour the Father"—We behold the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus—the centre of all the Divine attributes—and are lost in rapture-creating astonishment, which irresistibly, and sweetly impels us to exclaim, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be all the *Glory*!"

The man who does not see Jesus in the *Sabbath*, and the end of its formal observance, is certainly, instead of keeping and observing, most flagrantly breaking, and violating that day, which he professes to venerate, and religiously observe; and, in that case, is superstitiously ascribing that *honour* and *holiness* to a *day*, which belong, alone, to our dear Immanuel! And by such an idolatrous adoration of a *part of time*, is highly guilty of that crime, which is detestable in the eyes of him, who will not give his glory to another!

The blind and superstitious Jews of *old* most formally and religiously observed the *day*: but there they rested: and ascribed to their observance of it the *honour* exclusively due to the Sabbath's glorious antitype. They could not see the end of

the law, and, consequently, embraced a shadow, ignorant and careless of its invaluable substance! —They knew not that “the Sabbath was a shadow of *Good Things* to come.” Jehovah, therefore, most solemnly expresses his disapprobation of their *Sabbath-keeping*: for he cannot regard that worship, where Christ is not made the beginning and the end, the sum and substance, the life and essence, of every thing. Thus saith the Lord: “Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons, and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.” (Isaiah i. 13.)

The Lord does not complain of their not observing the day; but of their *superstition*; and their self-righteous dependance on their *Sabbath-keeping*. They did not see and exalt Christ in it; and, therefore, their *professedly pure* worship, was an abomination to the Lord! This superstitious observance of the day, which they retained till the coming of Christ, led them to accuse him of *breaking* the Sabbath.—This superstition they retain to the present day; and not only they, but a great many who profess christianity, who contend more for their own *holy observances*, than for the exaltation and glory of Christ! But we see Jesus in it, and the end of it, in the everlasting rest of his saints. O ye who contend for “days, and months, and years!” hear the language of the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament; attend only to the grammatical

meaning of the words, and then deny, if you can, that Christ is the end of the Sabbath, and a real Sabbath, a substantial, and *daily* rest to every spiritual believer! (Colossians ii. 16, 17.) “Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the SABBATH-DAYS; which are a shadow of things to come; BUT THE BODY IS OF CHRIST.” Jesus hath made his appearance; the glorious gospel-day breaks in upon us with beams of salvation; the shadows flee away; the True Light now shineth! We grasp no longer the shadow, but embrace, with ineffable delight, the glorious substance, and have always a *Sabbath-day*, when Jesus shines upon us! I have enjoyed, sometimes, many Sabbath-days in the course of a week; on a *Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday*, or any other day, when it pleased my precious Redeemer to pay me a love-visit.

He arose on the First day, and not on the Jewish Sabbath; and thereby has shown, that he is the end of it. His resurrection took place “In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.” (Matthew xxviii. 1.)

When Jesus arose the Sabbath was literally ended, the whole law completely fulfilled, and the whole Jewish ritual completely abrogated. On which glorious account, Paul rebukes the Galatians for their observance of days. (Galatians iv. 10.) and observed, himself, every day alike.

And this is so far from being what is termed *Antinomianism*, that it leads the sinner, not only to adore, and ascribe all glory to Jesus, but produces heart-felt, and affectionate obedience to him. The reverse, if any, leads to Antinomianism, and is calculated to encourage disobedience. For if only *one* day out of *seven* is to be observed to the Lord, might not those who have not the love of Christ at heart, take an advantage of it—might they not say, “As only *one* day out of *seven* is set apart for religion, the other *six* may be devoted to irreligion; and we may, on those days, persue what course we please.”

Has not such an advantage been universally taken of the *superstitious* observance of a Sabbath throughout our land? For, is it not a universal maxim to refrain from singing, and playing their carnal songs, on a Sunday, which are sang with so much pleasure all the week beside? Do not the very *chimes* in the steeples proclaim this, by playing on the Sunday some solemn psalm tune; on the other six days, some lively air, or tune to some *carnal song*.

It is the *ignorant* and *superstitious* observance of the day which I object to, and which scripture reprobates. I am happy, I am extremely happy, that one day out of seven is set apart, and enjoined by the law of my country for public worship, which day we wish to spend devoutly; and esteem it an inestimable blessing, that we can, unmolest-

edly assemble together, to worship God in that way, which his word inculcates, and a good conscience approves; but we think nothing of the *day* itself above any other day; it is not the day, but the privileges and blessings enjoyed thereon, that we esteem above mines of gold!

But we, my friends, are convinced that sin is the same, on whatever day it is felt, or committed. That which would be a *sin* on the *Sunday*, is, in our opinion, *sin* on the *Monday*, or any other day. The prohibition to sin, and the curse denounced against it, stands the same at all times and seasons. And the glorious Gospel of Christ, and the enjoyment of his presence, is as truly sweet, desirable, and delightful on any other day, as on a Sunday.

We know no difference between days in those spiritual things—but would wish, every day, to live in the *fear of the Lord*, and to keep a conscience void of offence, toward God, and toward man. While some advocates for a superstitious observance of *the day*, are saying, “*The Lord demands only a seventh part of your time;*” it is the affectionate cry of a child of God, “Lord, take not *a seventh part only*, but let me live to thee, and walk with thee *every day*! *Every day* give me bread from heaven; and *every day* let me feel the support of thy everlasting arms.” The real christian is an *every day* christian; he does not put on,

and take off his Religion, as some people do their *Sunday clothes*: the Righteousness of Christ is his constant and daily dress, and communion with God, through the blood of atonement, his insuperable delight: the former he always wears, the latter he always desires; but it is not the Divine Pleasure that he should always enjoy it.

Sometimes, a miserable *Sunday* and an happy *Monday*;—and, sometimes, he enjoys the whole week; at others, walks in darkness week after week, without the light of the Sun of Righteousness!

“The Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath,” (Mark ii. 29.) The institutor of it, and therefore greater than the *Sabbath*, and has it at his command; the Sabbath *served* a glorious end; pointing the believing Jews to Christ, till he came in the flesh. But we have more than the Sabbath: the Sabbath’s Lord is the portion of our souls! While Pharisees are contending for the *Servant*, we are enjoying the Lord and Master; the very substance and soul of the Sabbath!

The true Sabbath is the rest of God’s people, into which they enter, as led of the Spirit, and cease from their own works as God did from his. (Hebrews iv. 10.) which Rest, or Sabbath, they find in Jesus.

The Sabbath was a sign of sanctification to the Israelites. (Exodus xxxi. 13.) And who is made

over unto us sanctification, but a precious Jesus? (1 Corinthians i. 30.) We are set apart, and holy in him; and from him flows the sanctifying influences of the Holy Comforter, in our regeneration; for "He shall take of mine, says Jesus, and shall shew unto you."

The inner court was opened on the Sabbath. "Thus saith the Lord, the gate of the inner court, that looketh toward the east, shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened." (Ezekiel xlvi. 1.) During our working days, when we were in legal bondage, we had no admittance in the inward court; the doors of Gospel liberty were shut; but when Jesus, our rest, or Sabbath, arrived, the doors of everlasting love, mercy, and grace, were opened, and we had boldness to enter the Holiest of all through his blood.

I shall now proceed to shew how it *shall* be kept, and that the people of God do, absolutely, and from their hearts, observe the Sabbath, and keep it, holily; conformable to the spirituality of my text.

It is not an external, and formal, but an internal, and spiritual observance, and *enjoyment* of the Sabbath, which the believer, through the influence of Divine grace, most pleasurably, and scrupulously regards: and which the Lord, by the mouth of Isaiah, graciously promised to his church, more abundantly to bless them with, under the

Gospel dispensation. (Isaiah lxvi. 23.)” “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith the Lord.”

By a *new moon*, we are here to understand the *renewal* of the Spirit; and, when Jesus is pleased thus to visit the soul, it is a delightful Sabbath indeed! Sin is subdued, the *new man* put on, the world trampled under foot, and Satan conquered; while Christ himself communes with the sinner, and is alone exalted! And from one such a Sabbath, to another, the believer comes before the Lord to worship him. He waits the *return* of this delightful Sabbath; and when it arrives,

1. “He does not do his own ways.” When Jesus graciously approaches, and takes a poor sinner by the hand, guiding him with his counsel into the vernal pastures of the Gospel, where he feeds his sheep with ELECTION BY GRACE, and JUSTIFICATION BY IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS, he cannot do his own ways. The gates of heaven are opened to him, where he enters with exuberant delight, enjoying sweet communion with his covenant God; and finds glory begun below!

2. “He does not find his own pleasure.” That is, his own pleasure as a *creature*; but, satisfactorily enjoys, at the feet of Jesus, his Beloved, pleasures, which flow like a river with broad streams

—pleasures all divine—pelucid streams of eternal salvation, flowing from the right hand of his God, for evermore!

3. “Neither does he speak his own words.” When it is a Sabbath with the believer, the Lord is mouth and wisdom unto him; and the gracious words of the Lord—what the Lord has spoken to his soul—dwell familiarly on his tongue, and are repeated with rapture and delight! He exclaims, with David, “Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he has done for my soul.” O! that our *Sabbaths* may frequently return; that our conversation may be of Jesus; and to the glory and exaltation of his delightful name!

4. “He strictly attends to the divine prohibition in not kindling a fire on that Holy Day.” (Exodus xxxv. 3.) He has no occasion; the Lord himself kindles the fire of divine love in his heart; by which all the passions of the *new Man*, are lighted to a flame of zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and by which he offers the sacrifice of praise and adoration, at the foot of the divinely imperious Throne of God and the Lamb!

The *self-righteous* are perpetually kindling the fire of false zeal for the honour and glory of their well-performed duties, good works, virtue, and piety, by which they pretend to make themselves to differ from others: but hear what the Lord saith—“Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that

compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." (Isaiah l. 11.) The believer never wishes his heart to be inflamed but by divine love; which, till so illuminated and warmed, remains dark as Egyptian gloom, barren as a desert, and cold as ice! "It is the Spirit who quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

5. "He carries no burden on that day." Divine Grace has led him to Jesus; who gives him rest. He has rolled his every burden on the Lord, who sustaineth him, and who will never suffer him to perish! Liberated from the burden of sin, guilt, slavish fear, and black unbelief, he stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, and esteems the *Sabbath*, which he enjoys in him,

1. A DELIGHT. Renouncing his self-righteousness with abhorrence, he sets under the shadow of Christ with great *delight*, the fruit of whose redeeming love is truly sweet and delicious to his taste, (Solomon's Song ii. 3.) and in the multitude of his thoughts within him, the comforts which Jesus gives him, *delight* his soul. (Psalm xciv. 19.) Jesus, his Sabbath, is a delight to him, beyond all possible expression! 'Tis a heaven-descended delight—*Delight* peculiar to that ineffably sweet love-union, and communion, between the bleeding Saviour and a ransomed sinner!

2. The Holy of the Lord. Our dear Redeemer is, indisputably, the only HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, and it is in him that we are everlastingly holy, and from him alone that we derive holiness of heart: and, therefore, it follows, unavoidably, that to esteem the Sabbath HOLY, is to ascribe all Holiness, entirely, and unreservedly, to our immaculate Immanuel; who is the delightful and spiritual Sabbath of his Church!

3. *Honourable.* Where can the believer be found, who is not willing to ascribe all Honour, as well as all Holiness to Jesus? To keep the Sabbath, then, is to be brought into the presence of Jesus, to see, and know him to be the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and, dissolved by his love, to cry with rapture, and delight, peculiar to the triumph of faith, "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but to thy name be the glory! Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever, and ever, Amen!"

HYMN.

WE sing the Sabbath of the Lord,
 The saint's eternal Rest;
 For Jesus, in the heav'ns ador'd,
 Our Sabbath stands confess'd!
 For *days*, and *months*, and *years*, let Jews
 And Pharisees contend;
 Jehovah gives us nobler views
 Of their *important* end.

The *end* of ev'ry Jewish rite,
Our sacrifice, our Peace,
Our Life, our Righteousness, our Might,
Our Sabbath Jesus is!

The Sabbath's Lord descends to die,
And puts our foes to flight;
Before him all the shadows fly;
Like darkness chas'd by light!

The legal Sabbath well bespoke
The Rest which we possess
In Christ, who our own nature took,
To work our Righteousness!

Of things to come, supremely good,
The ancient hallow'd Day,
Till Jesus came, a shadow stood,
Then nobly fled away!

In Christ, our Sabbath, our Delight,
The Holy of the Lord,
We ever walk in spotless white!
Then, be his name ador'd!

Honour his name in ev'ry way;
All honour is his due,
Whose presence makes our Sabbath Day,
Whose mercy's ever new!

For Rest like this, ye Ransom'd join,
With notes of sweetest chord,
And sing, in sounds, and joys divine,
Our Sabbath is the Lord!

LETTERS

On various Subjects.

LETTER I.

*To the Church of Christ who assemble in Ebenezer
Chapel, Leicester.*

London, May 6, 1804.

DEAR FRIENDS IN THE TRUTH,

THE immortal mind of man is constituted of such capacious powers, as to render earthly objects incapable of satisfying its insatiate thirst for solid enjoyment. In a natural and unrenewed state it continually pursues, without ever obtaining the object of its pursuit, *Happiness*. For through the influence of that carnality and enmity to God, which fallen man is the natural subject of, he seeks happiness in those objects which are, in their very nature, calculated only to pierce his soul through with the keenest pain. And though he meets with perpetual disappointments, his mind, devoid of contentment, is ever on the wing, if possible, to reach that summit, which has to the present, proved insurmountable to its various attempts.

Happy, inexpressibly happy, the man whose eyes are opened to see his depravity; who feels his natural wretchedness; and whose heart, touched by the finger of divine grace, thirsts for God, weeps after Christ, and, finds the *eternal God* a sweet refuge, and the everlasting arms of love and mercy, affording that sweet solace of soul, and that indescribably delightful peace, which nothing terrestrial can ever interrupt!

The enjoyment of God, as having loved, still loving, and for ever loving my soul, is with me the summit of mental happiness, and I believe even of the joys of heaven! And I am more than ever convinced, that the Lord is not confined to the outward ordinances of his house, in administering strength and consolation to the weary and dejected mind.

Notwithstanding, my dear brethren, I know the value and preciousness of public worship and ordinances—I know their value and preciousness in a two-fold sense; first, from the sweet enjoyment of them, in past seasons, and secondly, at this very time, by the distressing deprivation of them. It affords me a peculiar joy at this gloomy time, to recollect the sweet times I experienced at *Leicester*, in assembling with *you*, to besiege a throne of grace with united hearts, and to mingle souls in the defence, and sweet enjoyment, of precious truth—the truth as it is in Jesus. There God was pleased to reveal himself, and was en-

joyed to our mutual comfort, and individual refreshment!

But, O what sadness mingles with my joy, that I cannot meet with you at this time! Yet, though at a distance, I am persuaded we are one in the sweet bonds of gospel truth and love. But as I have not an opportunity to address you verbally, I would make the pen the vehicle of that truth, which I would, as an instrument in the divine hand, communicate for your spiritual comfort, and which I earnestly wish to defend among you. I must first tell you something of my own experience. I have felt, since I came here great barrenness of soul, till Friday evening last, when I was very powerfully affected, and my stony heart melted down at a view of the amazing esteem and regard that the God of grace has for me, and the pleasure he takes in me; even in *me*! That sweet, that inexpressibly sweet scripture, afforded me unbounded consolation: *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*: Deut. xxxiii. 27. My views of the passage were something like these:

The eternal *God*—the *God* of grace, love, mercy, &c. to whom I am brought near by the blood of Christ, and who has repeatedly taken me in the arms of divine forgiveness, to bring my wandering soul back to himself—this God is my God for ever and ever! The *eternal*—eternal in his love, power, decrees, &c. who cannot change, for he is the *eternal God*; and this eternal