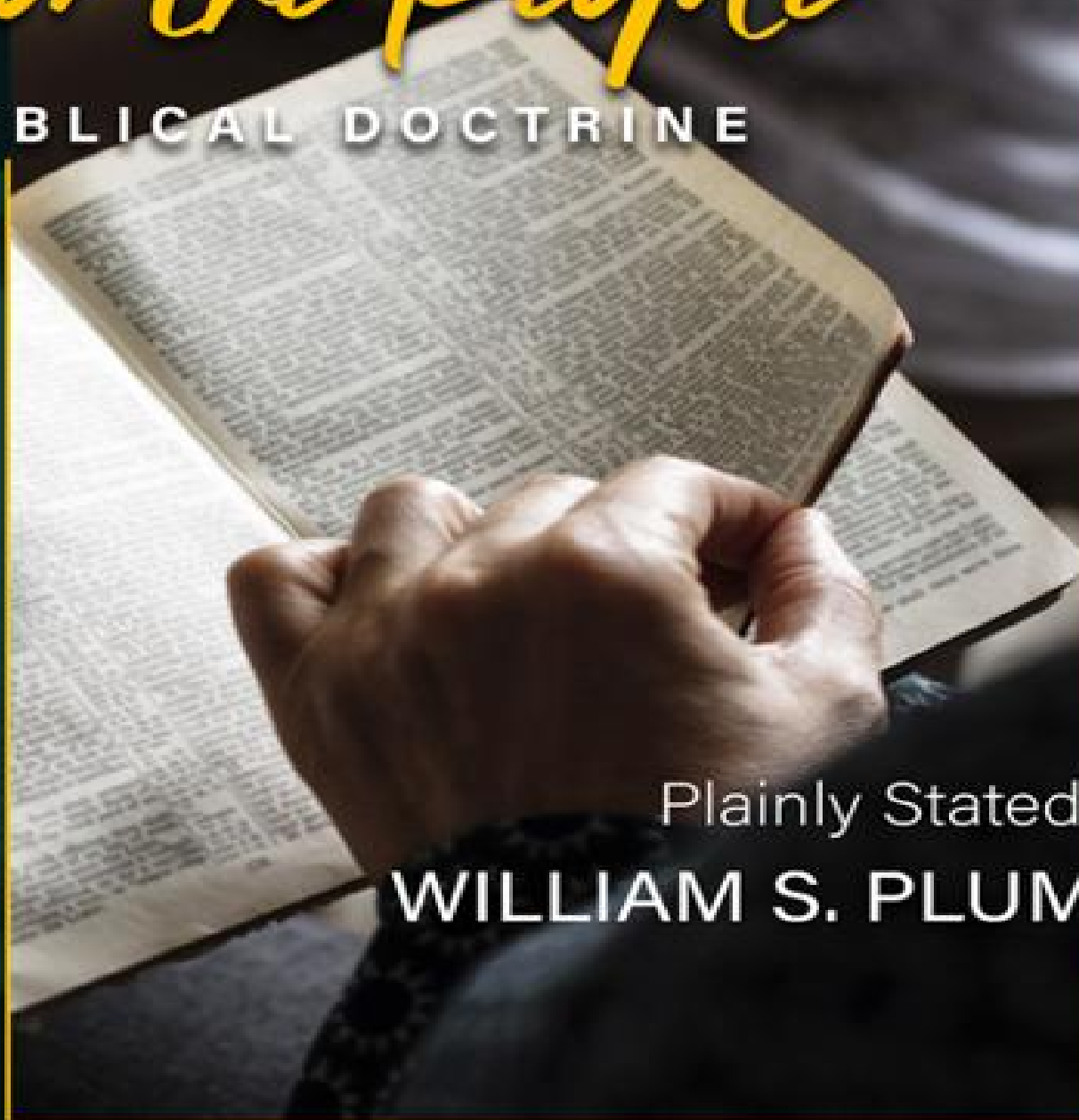




Theology for the People

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE



Plainly Stated by:
WILLIAM S. PLUMER

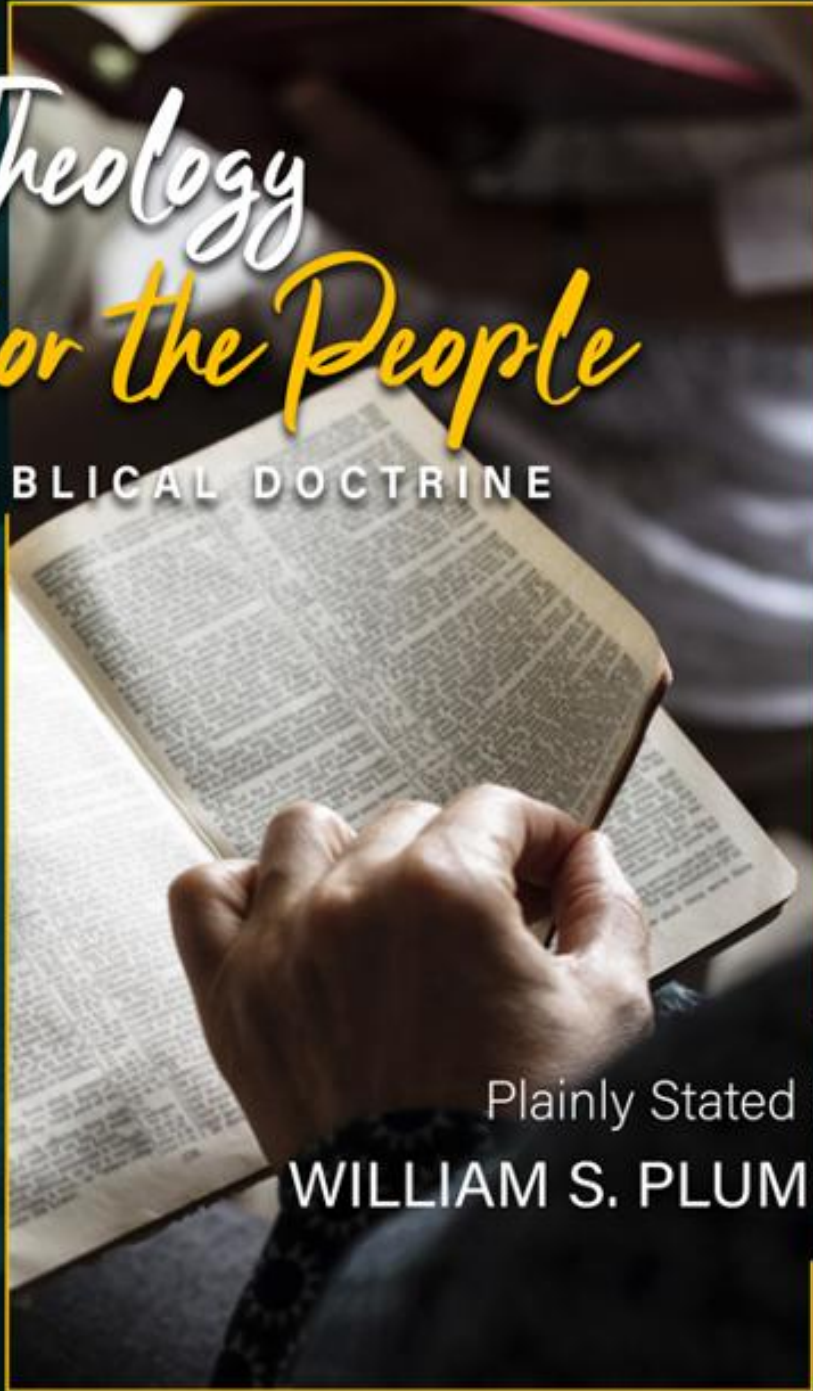


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Theology for the People

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Theology for the People

Biblical Doctrine, Plainly Stated

by William S. Plumer

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THEOLOGY

I. The word THEOLOGY means a discourse concerning God. The word itself is not found in the Scriptures. We have there "the word of God," "good doctrine," "sound doctrine," "form of doctrine," "doctrine of God," "doctrine of Christ," "form of sound words," "the Scriptures," and such like phrases. Theology is divinity, as a theologian is a divine. Theology treats of the being and perfections of God, of his relations to us, his purposes towards us, his promises made to us, his will concerning us, and the right way of pleasing him.

II. We cannot learn theology from other sources, than those which God himself opens to our minds. These are the volume of nature and the volume of revelation. The volume of nature is made up of all God's works. What we learn from it is called Natural Theology. In studying God's works we make use of our reason and of all true science, searching out all that we may know. Natural Theology is the foundation of all true religion. David says, "The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world." Psalm 19:1-4.

Paul says, "since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Romans 1:19-20. The Psalmist says, "Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them." Psalms 111:2. Many parts of Scripture say a great deal about God's works of creation and providence.

III. The other volume from which we learn theology is the Bible. This is the very word of God. 1 Thess. 2:13. It is the word of the living God,

that abides forever. 1 Pet. 1:23. In this volume God makes himself known to us in a new and special manner for our salvation. It draws out at length many of the lessons of natural theology, and tells us very clearly many things which nature taught us but dimly. Its peculiar glory is that it teaches the way of salvation to sinners. What we thus learn is called Revealed Theology.

IV. The knowledge of God possessed by angels and by the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, is very different in degree from that possessed by even godly and able men on earth. Here all men are liable to err, and all men do err. No man on earth is without some wrong view, or some ignorance, which mars his knowledge. This is no reason for sloth or discouragement; but it is a good reason why we should be humble and careful and teachable, and pray for light and divine guidance. It is far different in heaven. There they do always behold the face of God. Matt. 18:10. They do not hope for anything, for they already possess all good. Romans 8:24. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. 13:12. Knowledge without any mixture of error belongs only to the heavenly state. Yet a great part of the knowledge which the inhabitants of heaven have concerns the very things which good men are learning in this world. Those above know perfectly what we know in parcels only.

V. Natural theology teaches enough to make us guilty for not loving and obeying God. It condemns us--but it cannot save us! It leaves us without excuse, but it also leaves us without hope. Romans 1:20. It gives us clear information that there is something wrong in us, but it does not tell us how things may be put right. Natural conscience convinces of sin, and human misery shows that we have displeased God. But nowhere among the works of God do we read of mercy to the lost or pardon to the guilty. "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,

their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them." Romans 2:14, 15.

God never leaves himself without witness, in that he does good, and gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14:17. Men ought to know, and if their hearts were not blind they would know--that God made the world and all things therein, and that he is Lord of heaven and earth, and that they should seek the Lord, for in him they live and move and have their being. Acts 17:24-28.

VI. Revealed theology takes for granted and confirms all the truths taught by God's works. The volume of revelation never contradicts the volume of nature. He who speaks to us by his works is as surely the God of truth as he who speaks to us in Holy Scripture. God can neither deny nor contradict himself. Even Balaam's theology went so far as to admit that God cannot lie. Numb. 23:19. The divine sincerity is proclaimed in all worlds, and by all God does. If man had never sinned, nature would have taught him enough to make him an acceptable worshiper. But now that he has lost the favor and fellowship of God, and knows not where to turn, there is need of a guide from heaven—a new lesson both as to the matter and manner of serving God. The light of nature does not avail to salvation. The wisest of the heathen have declared their belief in the need of a great teacher with new light from heaven.

VII. This lack is supplied by Jesus Christ, his prophets, and his apostles. He said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me." John 7:16. The prophets were moved to write by the spirit of Christ. 1 Pet. 1:12. Indeed, all the holy men who wrote the Scriptures spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16. In Scripture are the best lessons of heavenly wisdom. The word of God is very plain. But the human mind is very weak, and sadly darkened. So that "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. Yet "the law of

the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Psalm. 19:7. The Scripture was given that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. 2 Tim. 3:17. If any man would be a good minister of Christ, let him "hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Tit. 1:9. The word of God is wholly unerring. Its authority is perfect. No flaw has ever yet been discovered in it. It leads the soul back to God, whom we have wickedly forsaken.

VIII. The end of all God has done and spoken is his own glory. "The Lord has made all things for himself; yes, even the wicked for the day of evil." Proverbs 16:4. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11. But the peculiar excellence of God's word is that it is suited to lead men to salvation. "These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name." John 20:31. God's word is savingly applied to his people, that they should show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Pet. 2:9.

REASON AND REVELATION

I. If man could not reason—he would be no better than a brute. When he will not reason—he is no better than a fool! He who gave us souls gave us our reason. We are guilty when we refuse rightly to use all our powers of mind. The stronger our faculties are the better, if directed to a right end. The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib; let us know the God who keeps and feeds us always. Brutes have instincts; men have reason. Let them think often, earnestly, wisely.

II. We may have a deep sense of our needs; but we are not fit to tell God in what he should instruct us. Nor can we judge of truths of

which we are wholly ignorant. But by using our reason aright we may learn whether God has indeed spoken to us in the Bible. In the same way we may, by his blessing, learn what his word means. Yet men are not saved by their wit nor by their logic. Some seem inclined to put reason in the place of the Almighty, and worship it. They speak great swelling words of vanity. They say that they have too good an opinion of God to believe that he will do such and such things; when he has often said he will do them, and when he is doing them every day. The human mind is very weak. It is liable to many prejudices. He who would find truth must love truth. Sincerity is always called for. He who would find truth must search for it as for hid treasure.

III. Reason cannot believe an absurdity. No contradiction is a truth. Men sometimes say that they believe things absurd, but they are mistaken. No lie is of the truth. It has not its nature nor its marks. If we knew all about it, we would see how absurd it is. A thing may be very strange, and yet it may be true. "Wonder is broken knowledge." God never wonders, because his knowledge is infinitely perfect.

IV. For a long time men sought to know God by reason alone, but they utterly failed. For ages the world by wisdom attempted to know God, but it knew him not. 1 Cor. 1:21. The more completely men were left without divine teaching, the grosser was their ignorance. A revelation therefore was clearly necessary. In lands where the word of God was not, the more the arts and sciences have been cultivated, the more have false gods been multiplied. The Chinese know many useful and ornamental arts, and have much literature, yet they have gods by the million. The more ancient Rome extended her conquests, the more gods did she worship in the Pantheon. The Athenians worshiped all the gods they knew, and then to be sure they omitted none, they erected an altar to the unknown God. Acts 17:23. Left to itself, reason will but grope its way to the judgment through the thickest darkness. "Whatever the light of nature could do for man before reason was depraved, it is evident it has done little for man since."

V. Why should it be thought incredible that He who made man should speak to him? The heathen tell us that their gods wrap themselves up in the mantle of their dignity, and retire from human affairs. But while the true God is in the heavens, he is also upon earth. To the teachable the volume of nature is constantly telling its secrets. Why may not He who knows all things, tell us something about himself, and the right way of pleasing him? He knows all things; why should not he tell us those things which greatly concern both his honor and our welfare? "He who planted the ear, shall he not hear? He who formed the eye, shall he not see? He who teaches man knowledge, shall not he know?" Psalm 94:9, 10. It is perverseness to deny that God can make known his mind if he chooses to do it. He who knows all things can teach us whatever it is important for us to know.

VI. A revelation, not accompanied with sufficient evidences of its being from God, would avail us nothing. If it were unfriendly to truth, justice, honor, kindness, or piety, we might know that it did not come from God. If it contained falsehoods or contradictions; if it rested on the mere assertion of some man who said God had spoken to him; if it were accompanied with no power over the human heart and conscience; if its doctrines were unworthy of even a good man; if it were accompanied with no signs, or wonders, such as God only can give; if its aim was not holiness; if those who walked most according to its spirit and precepts were vile and bad men; in short, if it promoted ungodliness and malignity—we could not regard it as a communication from a good God.

So, if the men who testified of the life, character, doctrines, and miracles of Jesus Christ, had been greedy of filthy lucre, anxious for human applause, or earnest in seeking for sensual gratifications, and by their stories had succeeded in these base plans, we could not have credited what they told us. But none of them ever accumulated wealth. Instead of pleasure, they had torture. Instead of honor or applause, they were esteemed the offscouring of all things. They were accounted as sheep for the slaughter all the day long. They were

always delivered unto death. Yet they never swerved from their testimony, but they constantly affirmed the truth of all they had spoken. Every kind of appropriate evidence accompanies the revelation which God has given us.

VII. When we open the Bible we find its statements calm, sober, reasonable; its doctrines searching and humbling to the pride of man; its precepts pure, just, and comprehensive; its promises plain and well suited to cheer the heart of godly men; its threatenings awful, and suited to deter the wicked from their courses. In short, it says nothing hurtful to man or unworthy of God; but it greatly encourages holy men in their right ways, and God is by it more honored than by all other books ever written. The only people who cheerfully submit all to God, are those who firmly believe the Bible.

VIII. This book has authority over the human mind and conscience. Such is its power, that when two noted and ingenious infidels of former days undertook to read it through in order to find faults in it, they were both converted, and both wrote in its favor. Its words are life and spirit. In a day of God's power they entirely transformed three thousand of Christ's murderers into his adoring worshipers. It still converts, purifies, and comforts the hearts of all who truly receive it.

IX. This word of God is intended for all. Even infidels, who know it and reject it, shall be judged by it. So said Christ, who will judge the world: "He who rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. By searching the Scriptures David was made wiser than his enemies. He had more understanding than all his teachers. He understood more than the ancients. Psalm. 119:98-100. He who has ears to hear, let him hear all that God says. He who has eyes to read, let him read all God's word. To a great mass of people, some of them enemies and opposers, Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39. It is a sad error in any church to

discourage the reading and study of God's word by the people. Such take away the key of knowledge. Luke 11:52. God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path. Psalm. 119:105.

DIVINE TRUTH EXCELLENT, THOUGH OFTEN MYSTERIOUS

I. Truth is in its very nature excellent. Religious truth has the highest excellence. As mind is above matter, as eternity is more lasting than time, as heaven is better than earth, as God is greater than his works—so religious truth excels all other truth. The fear and knowledge of God are the beginning of wisdom. He who has them, has light and understanding. "Divinity is the haven and Sabbath of all man's contemplations." The subjects, of which it treats, surpass all others in worth and practical usefulness. It opens to us the glorious fountain of all being, and of all blessedness. It tells us whence all creatures come. It gives the true theory of human nature. It teaches man correct views of himself, and of the moral government under which he lives. It settles the doctrine of an endless life beyond the bounds of time. Its truths make glad all the most virtuous of every generation. It cheers and guides poor wanderers through the wilderness of this world. It purifies men's hearts. For power, for sublimity, for refreshment, for purity, nothing can compare with its lessons. They humble without debasing. They elevate without puffing up. They beget modesty without cowardice. They embolden without impudence. They at once inspire beneficial fears and animating hopes. They give joy without levity. They make men to sorrow after a godly sort, and yet they greatly multiply the sources of happiness. To these ends they have a fitness in themselves.

II. To those who seek him with all the heart, God makes his truth efficacious by special divine influences. Even a heart dead in sin will revive under the energies of truth in the hands of the great Sanctifier. Therefore we ought to seek unto God by prayer. Often did David cry: "Teach me your statutes." "Open my eyes, that I may behold

wondrous things out of your law;" "Teach me good judgment and knowledge." We ought to be willing even to suffer affliction if it may but enlighten us in divine truth. The Psalmist said: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn your statutes." Psalm. 119:71. It is the very office work of God's Spirit to lead the soul in the way of life. All the understanding we have comes from him. Job 32:8. A man may have a sun-dial, but he cannot tell the time of day unless the sun shines upon it. So he may have the blessed Bible, but unless God's Spirit shines upon it, he will not gain the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

III. If the study of divine things is not a blessing to any person, it is because he is "sensual, having not the Spirit." He is blind, and cannot see afar off, and yet is too proud to submit to divine teaching. If men will not believe the truth that comes before them with proper evidence, they must continue ignorant of the greatest truths. And if men will not practice what they do know, they will make but slow progress in learning what they do not know. David learned much because he delighted himself in God's commandments. Psalm. 119:47. The promise is, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. A disobedient spirit is wholly opposed to good progress in knowledge. Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17. All this is true.

IV. Yet many truths have mysterious aspects. God himself is the greatest mystery in the universe. His gospel is a mystery of love, and grace, and wisdom. We can believe a mystery—that which we do not fully comprehend, which is above the power of our natural reason, or which we never could have known if God had not revealed it to us. We cannot believe anything which is absurd; but he who believes nothing except what he fully comprehends, will have a very short creed. Absurd things are not true. But many truths are mysterious. Man himself is known perfectly to none but Jehovah. All God's works are inscrutable. The greatest man on earth cannot tell how the grass

grows; how soil, and air, and water, and seed, and light, produce a plant. Nor do we know how bread, and meat, and milk, and honey, are turned into sustenance, and so made to nourish our bodies.

V. If God were no greater than ourselves how could we adore him? To worship one who is known to be in all respects an equal, or an inferior, is contrary to all right reason. Therefore those do greatly err, who think that God is altogether such a one as themselves; or who think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone—graven images of man's device. Acts 17:29.

VI. A mysterious doctrine may be very important to us. "The most mysterious of all are, in reality, the most important; not because they are mysterious, but because they relate to things divine, which must of course be mysterious to weak mortals, and, perhaps, to all creatures whatever."

VII. If it were our business to govern the world, it would be very important to us to know all things, and the reasons of them, as well as the modes of their working. But our work is far different. We must obey, submit, be learners, and have the spirit of little children.

VIII. The truths of revealed religion are most mysterious, as they respect the gospel plan. As far as the truths of natural religion are concerned, they are as plainly stated in Scripture as anywhere else. But when the question is, How shall sinners be saved? reason gives no answer, and nature teaches no lesson. The law of nature says, Do and live, disobey and die. But the gospel plan is for saving the guilty, and bringing back lost souls to God. Here was a great work to be done, and none but God could do it. Moreover, none but God knew how it could be done.

IX. It would be a great wonder if poor, blind, feeble men knew all about God, or could understand his wonderful ways. Augustine determined to give three days and nights in succession to prayer and meditation that he might know all about the mystery of the trinity.

On the third night he was overcome with sleep, and dreamed he was walking on the seashore. There he saw a little child, who was scooping a hole in the sand, and filling it with sea-water from a shell. "What are you doing, my child?" said Augustine. The answer was, "I am going to put all the sea in this hole." Augustine said, "You can never do that." The child looked up, light beaming in his eyes, and said, "I can do it, Augustine, as easily as you can comprehend the subject of your thoughts."

X. The errors into which men have fallen respecting mysteries are two. Some count everything false or doubtful which is mysterious. Others pretend to explain everything so as to make it comprehensible. The former are infidels, the latter are vain pretenders. The right way is to receive all the truth we can acquire respecting mysteries, and humbly leave the rest until God shall see fit to explain it to us. Thus, I know that God gave his Son to live and die for sinners, because he says so; but I know not how a holy and infinite God could stoop so low. If Jehovah hides himself, he is still Jehovah.

SHORT EXPLANATIONS OF SOME TERMS

Quite a number of words are used in theology which deserve some explanation.

I. One of these is RELIGION. This word points to the most important matter which can claim the attention of mortals. Sometimes it denotes the whole body of truth, which has God for its subject. Sometimes it points to that class of affections and that course of life, which have God for their highest object. Sometimes it seems to embrace all these. If men are right in their religion, other errors are reparable. If here they err, every step will be towards ruin. Religion is either true or false. There can be but one true religion. But the number of false religions are countless. If Christianity is true,

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism are false. If either of them is true, Christianity is false. Where a religion in the main is true, some of the forms of it may have much error mingled up with considerable truth. This mixture of error may be so great that the system may differ but little from some of the forms of false religion.

Some think the word "religion" is derived from a Latin word which means to review, or to reconsider. If this is the sense, it denotes a study of all that pertains to our duty to God. But most writers derive religion from a word which means to bind fast. If this is the sense, then religion is the same as obligation in regard to moral subjects. These may well employ the highest powers of the noblest creatures God has made. No man can slight them without loss and injury to his mind and heart. If these deserve no attention, life is an utter vanity. And if they deserve any attention, it is clear that they deserve our supreme attention. The foundation of all religion rests on the belief of the existence of God.

II. Another word requiring some explanation is WORSHIP. Sometimes the word is used generally, very much in the same sense as religion. But when we speak exactly, by worship we mean supreme religious homage paid to God alone under a sense of our moral obligations to him. The seat of acceptable worship is the soul. All sincere worship engages both the understanding and the affections. It must be hearty. "The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a spirit: and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:23, 24. The better we know God, the more capable are we of worshiping him aright. It is sad indeed when it can be truly said of men, "You worship you know not what." John 4:22. "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also. In understanding be men." 1 Cor. 14:15, 20.

Into all worship pleasing to God must enter faith, love, reverence, humility, uprightness, and knowledge. Insincere worship is highly

offensive to God. Worship is either private or public. Private worship ought to be as secret as our circumstances will allow. Matt 6:5, 6. Public worship cannot be laid aside without the greatest loss to the cause of truth and piety. All worship ought to be solemn, free from vanity and levity, in act, word, or spirit. It ought also to be free from vain forms and idle ceremonies. It ought not to be morose, nor surly, but cheerful and animated. It ought to be pure from superstition and fanaticism.

III. What is the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD? Sometimes we use the phrase "knowledge of God" as meaning the whole of true religion. But commonly we attach a more exact idea to it.

1. There is a speculative or theoretical knowledge of God. This is sometimes quite extended, embracing one's views respecting the existence, perfections, and will of God. But it has no power over the heart and conduct. He who has it lives like an atheist or an infidel. He holds much truth, but he holds it in unrighteousness. His knowledge, because not used aright, increases his guilt in the sight of God. "To him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.

2. There is a saving knowledge of God. This affects the heart and controls the conduct. It is eminently practical and experimental. This is that spoken of by Jesus Christ when he says, "This is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3. This knowledge is accompanied by love to God and man, and by true faith in the Redeemer and in the Father who sent him. It humbles the soul, and yet it sustains it in great trials. We would all have more knowledge of God if we put a higher estimate upon its value; if we had a deeper sense of our own ignorance, errors, and weaknesses; if we sought for knowledge with more earnestness, and especially if our prayers were more fervent. The great hindrances to our growth in divine knowledge are pride, self-conceit, a trifling levity of mind, sloth or a lack of diligence, the

indulgence of whims and fancies, calling men our masters, or believing things upon human authority.

IV. Who is a THEIST? He is one who believes in God. All Christians are theists. Originally the word theist meant the same as the word deist, and pointed to a believer in the divine existence. But for a long time the word deist has denoted modern infidels, who, professing to believe in the existence of God, denied that he had ever revealed his will to men. Commonly the writings and the lives of deists have been as contrary to good morals as they have been hostile to piety. All who believe in God are theists.

V. An ATHEIST is one who is without God. Atheists are of three classes: First, such as do not think the existence of God is sufficiently proven. Second, such as think there is some proof that there really is a God, but in their hearts wish there was none. And third, such as live and act just as they would if they believed there was no God. These all agree in this, that to all good ends and purposes they are "without God in the world." Men have been willing to lay down their lives rather than believe in the divine existence. Atheism helps nobody. If it could be proven to be true, it would make no man less wretched, less wicked, or less foolish; but on the contrary it would make him every way less fit to live. It teaches no good lessons. It begets no solid hopes.

VI. Atheism is not very widely separated from PANTHEISM. Men easily pass from one of these errors to the other. He who says that there is no God, and he who says that everything is God, have each a theory well suited to the most brutal knowledge, and to the lowest depravity. There have long been professed Pantheists in the world. Modern Pantheists are greatly given to contempt of the rest of mankind. They love to talk in a learned gibberish, which no one understands, not even themselves.

VII. ANTI-THEISM asserts positively that there is no God. This is the rashest assertion any man ever made. It can never be proven either

to be true or probable. A poor creature limited to a small part of our world asserts what none but an infinite mind could intelligently declare, if it were true, namely, that there is no God. No man can elevate his character, or improve the knowledge or the virtue of his race—by making assertions respecting a point on which his information does not bear some just proportion to the extent of the proposition which he lays down. None but a "fool" could or would say, "There is no God."

THE WORD OF GOD

I. In the Bible are sixty-six books. Of these thirty-nine are in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New. In the New Testament the books of the Old Testament are sometimes spoken of in three classes, as Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, Luke 24:44; sometimes in two, as Moses and the Prophets, Luke 16:29, 31; oftener as simply the Scriptures. It cannot be certainly proven that there ever were any sacred books which we have not now; but if any had been lost, that should not weaken our confidence in those we have. The Old Testament is quoted more than two hundred and seventy times in the New. The New Testament is at least once quoted in itself. Compare 1 Tim. 5:18, and Luke 10:7.

II. In Scripture is a wonderful variety of composition. In both Testaments we have historical books. The oldest epic poem in the world is the book of Job. The oldest lyric poems are the Psalms. In the Scriptures we also have parables, precepts, promises, threatenings, reproofs, warnings, encouragements, invitations, sermons, prayers, and arguments. The four Gospels contain the Life of Christ. The book of Acts is a wonderful piece of church history. The Old Testament has much more poetry than the New; but the New has much more epistolary writing than the Old. Indeed, of its twenty-seven books, twenty-one are in the form of letters.

III. The Scriptures were written by God's command. "Write this for a memorial in a book." Exod. 17:14. "Take you a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen." Isaiah 8:1. "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Rev. 1:19. In both Testaments God directs us to look at the words thus written: "To the law and to the testimony." Isaiah 8:20. "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39. Nor are we referred to them as of doubtful authority, but as of binding force. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16.

IV. The Scriptures are, therefore, the word of God. He would not inspire men to utter falsehood. "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm. 12:6. The inspiration granted to the sacred writers was above nature, and was full, infallibly preserving them from error. The assertion that the writers of Scripture were not inspired to write the very words they gave us is not true. The Bible is the word of God. If God did not give us the very words of the Bible, then we may alter it as we please. The Scriptures claim verbal inspiration in such phrases as these: "Thus says the Lord;" "Hear the word of the Lord;" "I have put my words in your mouth;" "Words which the Holy Spirit teaches."

V. The Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, are the very words of God, and must be taken as the final authority. But it is lawful to translate the Scriptures. Christ and his apostles freely quoted a translation of the Old Testament made into the Greek language nearly three hundred years before Christ was born. So we have in English an excellent translation. Take it all in all it is perhaps the best translation made. It is a wonderful fact that every translation yet made--except a very few given to the world by gross errorists, and held in general contempt--have pointed out the way of life, so that an honest and intelligent mind need not be misled.

VI. The Scriptures are a sufficient rule of faith and practice. So Christ himself taught, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke 16:29, 31. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." John 15:15. The Bereans were commended as noble because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily." Acts 17:11. The same doctrine is taught in the Old Testament: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

VII. It should be remembered that the division of the Scriptures into chapters and verses is not of divine authority. They often aid us in finding a place; but they are sometimes awkward, and improperly break the sense. Neither is there anything binding in the order in which the books are bound up in the Bible. Because of its subject matter Genesis naturally comes first; and in the New Testament the Gospels fitly enough are placed first, because they are the beginning of all that Christ said and did. Mark 1:1; Acts 1:1.

VIII. Though the Scriptures were not intended to teach us physical science, yet they teach nothing contrary to any science truly so called. They speak of the sun rising and going down just as the common people do now; just as Sir Isaac Newton and learned men did. But no one is thus misled.

IX. The Scriptures are very deep and rich in meaning. How could it be otherwise? They treat of the deep things of God. And yet they are plain and intelligible. Therefore the good man's "delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night." Psalm. 1:2. By the word of God the Christian is called upon to prove himself,

to prove his own work, yes, to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good. 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4; 1 Thess. 5:21. The Scriptures are very bold, and say: "But if, in fact, our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. Regarding them: the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed." 2 Peter 1:19. The early preachers of the gospel did not shun to declare all the counsel of God. Acts 20:27.

X. Over a revelation transmitted by oral tradition, a written revelation has these advantages: 1. It is more clear to those at a distance; 2. It is more permanent; 3. It enables us to correct errors; 4. We can carry it with us wherever we go, and refer to it as often as may be necessary. For a long time the brevity of human life has been such as to render oral tradition very vague. Then human depravity is so great that men are often tempted to change the truth of God into a lie.

XI. The great means of understanding the Scriptures are, 1. Earnest, fervent prayers for divine illumination. Psalm. 119:18. 2. Devout meditation on the great truths therein revealed. Psalm. 119:97. 3. Earnest and honest inquiry, with a readiness to do the will of God when known. Acts 8:31-38. 4. Comparing Scripture with Scripture. 1 Cor. 2:13. All documents are, as far as possible, to be explained by themselves—the dark by the more luminous parts. The Bible, to an unusual extent, is a self-interpreting book. It is delightful to witness the progress of a diligent student of God's word. "The hand of the diligent makes rich." Chalmers says: "Many a cottage patriarch, with no other medium than his mother-tongue, becomes a greater proficient in the wisdom and doctrines of the Bible, than the most accomplished linguist or grammarian."

XII. Some truths are fundamental and some are not. He who denies a God, subverts all religion. He who denies Christ, subverts the gospel.

The Bible ought all to be believed. But the human mind is weak and erring. Let us hold fast all the truth we know. Let us love all truth. If no truth is fundamental, the gospel is but a fable. If all truth is essential, who can be saved? for no man on earth either knows or embraces all truth.

NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD

I. NAMES are often things. They often make very deep impressions for good or for evil. In early times the names of men were sometimes given by inspiration. In almost every case they seem to have been intended to express some hope or commemorate some event. All the names of God found in Scripture are given by inspiration of God. When we translate the Scriptures into any language, we ought to select such words as will most clearly convey the correct ideas found in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. God's names belong to him as a person. But in Scripture the word name, when applied to God, is taken to include all by which he is known—his titles, Exod. 3:13, 14; perfections, Exod. 33:19; word, Psalm. 138:2; worship, 1 Kings 5:5; Psalm. 76:1; and sometimes for God himself, Proverbs 18:10. The true design of a name is to make known to us better than we knew before, the nature of him who is spoken of.

II. A TITLE has much the same design as a name, and it is sometimes used interchangeably with it. But, strictly speaking, the title arises from the office, rank, or dignity of one to whom it is given.

III. The names of God are many, as Lord, God, the Almighty, the Most High. Very often an epithet is attached to the name of God, as the great God, God only wise. In like manner the titles of God are many, as Father, Master, Shepherd, King, Governor, High Tower, Man of War, Refuge, Portion, Reward, etc. Here also epithets are sometimes attached, as "The King, eternal, immortal, invisible," "Good Shepherd," etc.

IV. In the Old Testament the most common name for the Supreme Being in the Hebrew is Jehovah; in the English commonly rendered LORD, and printed in small capitals. The Jews think the true pronunciation of this word is lost, and so when they come to it they either make a solemn pause or in its place use the Hebrew word for God. But this is superstition. Numb. 6:24-27. The word Jehovah teaches God's self-existence, independence, eternity, and unchangeableness. He has life in himself. He depends on no one for anything. He inhabits eternity. He is the same forever and ever. One could almost wish that wherever this word occurs it were given us entire—Jehovah. Many works have been written on this word. They do not edify the common people. The word Jah, Psalm. 68:4, is a poetic abbreviation of the word Jehovah. Another name of the same import is found in Exod. 3:14, and is rendered I AM THAT I AM. The name Jehovah is incommunicable. It is never fitly given to any creature. Isaiah 42:8; Hos. 12:5.

V. In the Old Testament the next most common name for the Almighty is rendered God. It is found in the first verse of Genesis. Some think it chiefly refers to God as Creator. It is commonly found in the plural number. This name expresses the excellence of God's nature and authority. It is not incommunicable, for in Psalm. 82:6 it is applied to magistrates, and in Psalm 97:7 to angels. Compare Heb. 1:6.

VI. There is another word applied to God, sometimes rendered Lord, as in Psalm. 110:1; but then it is not printed in capitals. It means Master or Owner. There are several other names given to God in the Old Testament, but it is perhaps not necessary now to explain them.

VII. In the New Testament we have the word Lord as one of the names of God. It is there often used as the translation of the word Jehovah. Romans 10:13. The Greek word from which it comes expresses dominion, right of possession, right of property, authority, excellence.

VIII. The word rendered God in the New Testament probably comes from a word which means to build: "He who built all things is God." Some, however, give to the word a much more extended signification.

IX. No language has a better word for the name of the Supreme Being than the English. GOD is an abbreviation of the word good, which was formerly written with but three letters. This name is beautifully expressive of correct ideas of Jehovah. Jesus said, "There is none good but one, that is God." The meaning is, there is none independently, originally, and infinitely good but one. God is good so as no one else is. This name expresses with great force the harmony and loveliness of the divine character: "God is love."

X. Sometimes two or more names of Jehovah are joined together, as the Lord God, Lord God Almighty. And that we may know historically what sort of a being God is, he is spoken of as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, the Lord God of Elijah. So also God is called the Father of spirits, the Father of mercies, the God of peace, the God of all comfort, the God of love, etc.

XI. While we ought carefully to avoid all superstition respecting the names and titles of God, and ought to employ them whenever truth and edification require, we ought on the other hand carefully to guard against all profane and irreverent use of divine names and titles. As to any man that which he most highly esteems is for a God, so his idols and his appetites are called gods. 1 Cor. 8:5; Phil. 3:19. Even the devil is called the God of this world. 2 Cor. 4:4.

XII. It ought not to hinder us from studying the character of God, to find that we cannot perfectly comprehend his nature or his ways. That fact ought to make us modest, humble, and reverential. God does indeed dwell in inaccessible light. No man has seen him, or can see him and live. And yet he has graciously revealed himself to us in many ways. To the question, "What is God?" the best answer I have

ever seen is, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." We know God by his names, titles, word, and works of creation and providence. We best know him as he is revealed to us by his Son. Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 14:9.

XIII. When we say that God is a spirit, we speak justly. Our Savior did the same. John 4:24. We thereby intend to remove from our conceptions of him all idea of his having a body. He cannot have a material nature, else he would be visible somewhere. But the Scripture says he is invisible. 1 Tim. 1:17. If he had a material nature, and we knew what it was, we might lawfully make some likeness or image of him at least in our minds. But he expressly assigns as a reason why we shall not make any likeness of him--that we never saw any similitude of him. Deut. 4:12, 15, 16.

XIV. When we say that God is a Spirit, we assert that he is a substance, not material indeed, but still possessing properties and attributes; not imaginary, but real; not dead, but living; having beyond all other spirits understanding, will, and power. If there is anything real and living, God is. He is often and fitly styled the living God.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

I. All God's attributes are perfections; and all God's perfections are immutable, without bound, eternal, consistent with each other, and essential to his glorious character. Without any one of them he would not be God, nor could we adore him.

II. Many attempts have been made to classify the attributes of God; nor would it be safe to assert that these have been of no service. Some have spoken of them as positive and negative; others as absolute and relative; others as natural and moral; and still others as communicable and incommunicable. Perhaps the latter of these has

been as helpful as any other; but none of them completely covers the whole case. When we look at a rainbow we see a variety of colors, yet blended into one rainbow. So is the character of God one perfect whole, though he has various attributes. We cannot exactly define the limits of one color in the rainbow, and tell where it blends with another. In like manner there is a blending of one divine perfection with another, yet the whole is one infinitely beautiful and perfect character. There is nothing in excess; there is nothing lacking. We do not separate the rays of the rainbow, though we distinguish between them. Neither do we separate, but merely distinguish between the attributes of God. In the Bible the place given to the divine attributes is very large. The subject is vastly important. It ought to fill a large space in all our religious teachings and thoughts. Yet we cannot go beyond what we are taught from above. We know not God, except as he reveals himself in his word and in his works.

III. In forming our ideas of God's character we ascribe to him all that we esteem perfection, and refuse to ascribe to him anything that we esteem an imperfection. So that if we should learn of any excellence of which we are now ignorant, we should at once, if piously disposed, say that God had it. It is hardly possible for anyone to value too highly the knowledge of God's perfections. The best way of studying the subject is by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Beware of one error sometimes committed in studying God's character: never imagine that one of his perfections is in conflict with another. His justice perfectly agrees with his mercy.

IV. In teaching us the nature of God the Scriptures often use two figures of speech. One is where they employ the parts of the human body to represent to us the acts or attributes of God. As men see with their eyes, so to teach us God's omniscience the Scriptures speak of the eyes of the Lord. And as men hear with their ears, so God's gracious attention to our prayers is spoken of as his ears being open. Sometimes we have both these figures in the same verse: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Psalm 34:15; 1 Pet. 3:12; 2 Chron. 6:40. Oftener perhaps they

are spoken of separately: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Proverbs 15:3. Compare Amos 9:8. "Lord, hear my voice: let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication." Psalm 130:2. Compare Psalm 10:17. In like manner we often read of the face of God, the hand of God, and the arm of the Lord. Isaiah 51:9; Psalm 34:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; Deut. 5:15; Acts 3:17. In like manner the earth is called God's footstool, as if he trod upon it; and the sea is the path for his footsteps. Isaiah 66:1; Acts 7:49; Psalm 77:19.

The other figure of speech is where the feelings of the human heart are used to teach us the mind or nature of God. Thus the Most High is said to be pleased or displeased. 1 Kings 3:10; Isaiah 53:10; Gen. 38:10; Psalm 60:1. So God is said to be wearied with the tiresome iniquity of men, Isaiah 43:24; Mal. 2:17; and to be angered with men's sins, Psalm 106:32. But none of these things need perplex any one. We have such forms of speech employed to aide our conceptions of God. They are intended to give us some idea of the nature of God, who has neither passions nor bodily parts, and yet surely acts in a way pointed out by these figures.

V. These attributes certainly belong to God: self-existence, independence, eternity, immutability, infinity, spirituality, simplicity, majesty, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, wisdom, truth, faithfulness, benevolence, holiness, justice, glory, happiness or blessedness, greatness, incomparableness, unsearchableness, and unity. In studying the divine character, it is very safe to follow the Scriptures and admit such distinctions as are made in his holy word.

VI. The self-existence of God is his having life in himself. John 5:26. God owes not his existence to any other. He would exist if there were no other being in the universe. We live and move and have our being in God; but he lives and acts and has his being in himself. He is never strengthened or weakened in his existence, by others. There is no

greater mystery than God's self-existence. He is deathless, immortal.
1 Tim. 1:17.

VII. Of course he is independent. Were he not self-existent he would be dependent. He who has his life by the will or power of another, is in the highest degree dependent. But he who has his life without and beyond the will of others, must be God, and must be independent in all his perfections. He is far above his highest creatures. Of course creatures can lay God under no obligations. And it is both folly and wickedness to claim for ourselves or to ascribe to any creature independence of God. God often asserts his own independence, and devout men love to know that he is wholly beyond need, or the help of man. Job 15:1 5; Psalm 50:9-12; Isaiah 40:13, 14; Romans 11:35.

VIII. God is also eternal. A deaf mute beautifully said, "Eternity is the lifetime of God." And a great prophet more beautifully says of him, "He inhabits eternity." Isaiah 57:15. In his sublime psalm Moses says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Psalm 90:2. So in like manner the prophet says, "His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. God's existence is not measured by minutes, hours, days, years, or centuries. With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. God's eternity is matter of worship, not of curiosity. "An eternity past puzzles all human comprehension." No less incomprehensible is an eternity to come.

IX. God is immutable in his nature, attributes, and purposes. Infinitude does not create a greater gulf between man and his Maker than does immutability. With the Most High is "no variableness neither shadow of turning." Jas. 1:17. All things else change, because they are finite or created. Not so with God. Psalm 102:26; Heb. 1:12. It is a great mercy to godly men, that they can change for the better; but it is a joy to them that the Most High changes not. 2 Cor. 3:18. The wicked often pervert this doctrine to the worst purposes, even to the restraining of prayer, but that is their folly and their sin. Every

change in character is for the better or the worse. If God could change for the better, that would show that his character is not now perfect. If he could change for the worse, we could not adore an imperfect being. "I am the Lord; I change not." Mal. 3:6.

X. God is also infinite. Both God's unchangeableness and infinitude relate to all his perfections and to his very being. In every sense God is unlimited. No wise being could limit himself, and none could limit the Almighty but himself. It is as clear as day that he who made all things must be boundless. The Scriptures expressly declare that in several of his perfections he is infinite. Psalm 16:2; 147:5; Isaiah 6:2-6; Job 4:17, 18; Romans 1:20; Heb. 11:3.

XI. God is a Spirit. We read of the Spirit of God in the second verse of Scripture, and often afterwards; but this refers to the third person of the Trinity. God's spirituality is implied in all the Old Testament Scriptures. But our Lord says expressly, "God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. While God's will is the rule of worship, his nature is the foundation of worship. When we say God is a Spirit, we reject all gross conceptions of him as possessed of bodily parts, or personally connected with matter. It is because God is a Spirit that he is unchangeable, for matter is always changing. For the same reason he is the "incorruptible God," as Paul calls him, Romans 1:23. For the same cause he is "invisible." Romans 1:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27. He is alike imperceptible to all our senses. "No man has seen God at any time." 1 John 4:12. The perfection of the character of God is essentially connected with his spirituality. God is not only a Spirit, but he is uncreated spirit. This is the great difference between God on the one side, and angels and men on the other; so that the difference between him and them must forever be immeasurable. He is the Father of our spirits. Heb. 12:9. We are his offspring. Acts 17:28. But God is a Spirit existing forever, uncaused, uncreated. No wonder God forbids men to worship him by images. Exod. 20:4, 5.

XII. Because of the divine spirituality we must believe in the divine simplicity. God is an uncompounded essence. His attributes are all essential. They all inhere in his infinite excellence. His nature is not complex, though his attributes are distinct. Not only is there no deceit, no subtlety in the divine mind, but everything is unmixed, uncompounded in his being and nature.

XIII. With God also is solemn majesty, unequalled grandeur. An ancient king of Egypt rode in a chariot drawn by four conquered kings. But Jehovah "rides upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old." Psalm 68:33. "Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud." Isaiah 19:1. There are two passages of Scripture which evidently describe the same august scene. The first is 2 Sam. 22:8-18; the other is Psalm 18:7-17. No good man can read either of these passages without being impressed with the solemn majesty of God. There is another extended portion of Scripture on the same subject which has been thought by some to be the sublimest part of the oracles of God. It is found in Hab. 3:3-16. Read it. "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty." 1 Chron. 29:11. "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty." Psalm 29:4.

XIV. God is omnipotent. The power of God is sufficient to effect whatever he is determined to do. This is called his ordinate power. It also could do whatever involves not a contradiction. This is called his absolute power. His ordinate power produced and sustains heaven and earth. By it he has wrought all his pleasure in all places of his dominion. By his absolute power he could have made more worlds and more orders of beings than he has made, if he had seen fit to do so. None can think of greater power than that by which something is made out of nothing. Yet out of nothing God has made all things. Nor do any of his works cost him labor. He said, "Let there be light; and there was light." Gen1:3." He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. He upholds all things by the word of his power. Heb. 1:3. "He stretches out the north over the empty place, and hangs the earth on nothing." Job 26:7. "He binds up the water in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." Job

26:8. "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof." Job 26:11. "He takes up the islands as a very little thing." Isaiah 40:15. "He weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." Isaiah 40:12. Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him! The thunder of his power who can understand? The stability of the universe depends upon the power of God. If any says that God cannot make a thing to be and not to be, at the same time and in the same sense, and thence argue that his power is limited, the answer is, that we ascribe to God nothing but perfection. Absurdities are far from him. It was a great revelation which God made to the patriarch, "I am the Almighty God." Gen. 17:1.

XV. God is everywhere present. He fills immensity. He is a spirit, and cannot be divided; yet he is always present in every place with the whole of his being and nature. No limits can bound him. A good part of the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm is taken up in celebrating God's omnipresence. "You both precede and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to know! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me." Psalm 139:5-10. Nowhere does the Psalmist use more beautiful imagery than here. The sun is distant from the earth ninety-two millions of miles; and yet ninety-two millions of times ninety-two millions of miles beyond the sun in every direction God is, as much present as in our earth.

XVI. God is also omniscient. His knowledge is infinite in kind and extent. It is wholly underived. Job 21:22. There is no succession in God's knowledge. It is eternal. He knows all things past, present, and future; all things that ever have been, are, or ever shall be. All actual existences are before his mind. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18. "His understanding is

infinite." Psalm 147:5. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13. "Hell is naked before him, and destruction has no covering." Job 26:6. To him the gates of death have been opened, and he has seen the doors of the shadow of death. Job 38:17. In heaven, earth, and hell, nothing is hid from his all-seeing eye. God knows the hearts of all his creatures. Psalm 17:3; 139:1-5. How this omniscience troubles the wicked many have felt and declared. The darkness hides not from God, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to him. Psalm 139:12.

God also knows all things which ever could have been, could now be, or could hereafter be on any conceivable supposition. His intelligence embraces all plans, all truths, all systems. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Psalm 139:6. Ignorance is a great imperfection. God can neither learn nor forget anything.

XVII. Of course God is infinitely wise. He orders all things to a right end--even his own glory. In every part of creation his wisdom shines forth. "By wisdom he made the heavens." Psalm 136:5. "O Lord, how manifold are your works; in wisdom have you made them all." Psalm 104:24. Creation has sometimes been criticized. The result has been the folly of fools. Every muscle, fiber, joint, gland, vein, and artery of an animal frame is well fitted to the use for which it was intended. The blindness of men concerning the displays of God's wisdom is one of the firmest proofs of a sottish depravity. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." 1 Cor. 3:19, 20. Never did folly show itself more clearly than when Pharaoh said to his great men, "Come, let us deal wisely." The masterpiece of divine wisdom is the plan of redemption, where "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." It is wiser for us to cry, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

How unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways!" than to say, "We are the men; wisdom will die with us."

XVIII. Jehovah is a God of truth. As he cannot die, so he cannot lie. He is infinitely removed from everything like insincerity or deception. God tempts no man, mocks no man, deceives no man. All his calls and offers and statements are sincere. "It is impossible for God to lie." Heb. 6:18. The truth of God is the basis of all our reasonings in natural religion. Admit that God will favor a lie, and miracles prove nothing in favor of any teaching. All that he has said is true. God's truth relates to all that he has spoken.

XVIX. The divine faithfulness, strictly speaking, relates to the divine promises, though in Scripture faithfulness and truth are sometimes used interchangeably. Whatever God has engaged to do, he will certainly perform. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." 2 Pet. 3:9. "Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." Isaiah 25:1. His faithfulness reaches unto the clouds, yes, unto all generations. Psalm 36:5; 119:90. The hopes of the pious neither have nor need any firmer rock on which to rest than that found in the absolute certainty that God will make good all his engagements.

XX. Jehovah is a God of infinite benevolence. His good-will has no parallel. The terms used to express this divine perfection are such as love, pity, goodness, kindness, mercy, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering. That was a great revelation of himself which God made to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. 34:6. Because God is pure he has delight in all his holy creatures; but because he is kind he pities the distressed, is patient towards the rebellious, offers grace and life to the guilty, and is good to all. In any other being, benevolence would be exhausted by the perversity and ingratitude of men. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Lam. 3:22. All creation is but the overflowing of his love. Jehovah is

infinitely removed from all malice, or evil intention. In creation, providence, and grace--are many and amazing wonders of love. The whole story of the divine kindness will never be told, though saints and angels will be telling it forever.

XXI. God is holy. In his nature is infinite rectitude. It is forever impossible that he should ever think or do any wrong, or approve of wrong thoughts or acts in others. He is glorious in holiness. He is so pure that the heavens are not clean in his sight. Job 15:15. Every creature is such that but for God's care and support he might commit moral wrong. To say the same of God would be blasphemy. Men's views concerning God's holiness, generally decide their whole system of religious doctrine. He who thinks lightly of the purity of his Maker thinks lightly of sin, and so has wrong views of all evangelical doctrine. Jehovah himself calls sin a horrible thing and an abominable thing. Jer. 5:30; 44:4; Hos. 6:10. All godly men admire God's holiness. The worship of heaven is much directed to this divine attribute. Isaiah 6:1-5. God's purity is the rule and the motive of our purity. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7; Amos 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:15.

XXII. From the holiness of God necessarily flows his justice. Because God is just, he gives to all according to their deeds, whether they be good or evil. To do otherwise would be contrary to spotless purity. "That be far from you to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from you; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18:25. Because God is just he cannot clear the guilty. His justice is inflexible. It surrenders nothing, compromises nothing, overlooks nothing. It never fails. Nothing could prevail with God to infringe upon the demands of justice. This is clearly proven by the death of Christ. The blessed Savior was always and perfectly holy; yet when by his own choice he stood in the place of sinners, and bore the curse of the law in their stead, justice turned not aside its flaming sword. The awful language of the Bible is: "God spared not his own Son." It is joy to all godly men that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of God's throne. Psalm 97:2. Justice is an amiable perfection in God.

The wrath, anger, indignation, vengeance, fury, and hot displeasure of God--are nothing but his justice manifested against sin. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne." Psalm 89:14. "Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep." Psalm 36:6

XXIII. God is also glorious. Sometimes glory is taken in the sense of splendor or luster. In this sense it differs little from majesty. At least it implies great grandeur. How glorious in this sense God is was wonderfully shown at Mount Sinai. So terrible was the sight that even Moses exceedingly feared and quaked. Heb. 12:21. The pillar of cloud and of fire was a display of this brightness. The Lord is the "God of glory." The face of Moses in the mount with God contracted such brightness from the beams of the divine splendor around him, that when he came down the light of his face was painful to others to look upon. The glory of the Redeemer covered the eyes of Saul of Tarsus as with scales for days. There is a remarkable passage of Scripture found in Exod. 33:18-23. Let the reader turn to it. Sometimes the word glory means honor or renown. In this sense also God is glorious. Exod. 15:6; Psalm 66:2; 145:5.

XXIV. God is also infinitely happy. His blessedness is without bound and underived. He has all and infinite resources in himself. No man can be profitable to him. Job 22:2, 3. He is the blessed or happy God. 1 Tim. 1:11. God cannot be unhappy. The divine blessedness flows from God's infinite perfections.

XXV. God is great. He is great in his being and in all his perfections. "O Lord my God, you are very great!" Psalm 104:1. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." Psalm 145:3. "Praise him according to his excellent greatness." Psalm 150:2. There is no absolutely little sin, because He against whom we sin is infinitely great.

XXVI. God is incomparable. In his being, perfections, works, and ways there is none like God. See Exod. 8:10; 15:11; Psalm 86:8; 89:6;

Isaiah 40:18; 46:9. To worship God by images or pictures is very offensive to him; first, because he forbids it; second, because it degrades him. See Acts 17:29.

XXVII. God is unsearchable. He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see. 1 Tim. 6:16. "His pavilion round about him are dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." Psalm 18:11. "Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what can you do? deeper than hell, what can you know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." Job 11:7-9. Even in heaven they sing, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty." Rev. 15:3. The unsearchableness of God is not cause of grief, but is matter of joy to all right-minded beings.

XXVIII. God is one. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. 6:4. "There is but one God;" "There is none other God but one;" "God is one;" "There is one God." 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5. There are not three Gods, nor two Gods--but one God. God is one in the highest possible sense. All the gods of the heathen are vanities. We cannot define the unity of God, because unity is a simple idea. When we say that God is one, we assert that he is not two or more; but we do not mean to say that he does not exist in three persons, for that would contradict the Scriptures.

THE TRINITY

I. The word trinity is not found in the Bible, but the doctrine of the trinity is there. The word trinity means the unity of three; that is, the unity of the three divine persons.

II. The word person, when used on this subject, does not mean a separate individual, but a distinct existence. It denotes a distinction in the divine Being, real, but inexplicable. The doctrine of the trinity has had many enemies. The Arians contended that the Son of God

was totally and essentially distinct from the Father; and so in nature and dignity inferior to the Father. They also taught that the Holy Spirit was not God, but was created by the power of Jesus Christ. The Sabellians denied that there was more than one person in the Godhead, and said that the Son and the Spirit were mere virtues or functions of divinity. The Socinians taught that Christ was a mere man, and that the Holy Spirit was not a distinct subsistence. The Unitarians confine the glory and attributes of divinity to the Father. They do not allow Christ or the Holy Spirit to be truly divine. Still, the doctrine of the trinity has been held and is now held by the great body of Christians.

III. The persons of the Trinity are clearly distinguished in the Scriptures as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matt. 28:19; elsewhere as God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. 13:14. The first person of the Godhead is spoken of as one God, the Father, of whom are all things. The second is spoken of as one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. 1 Cor. 8:6. The third is spoken of as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Comforter sent to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

IV. The Father is neither begotten, nor does he proceed from the Son or the Spirit. The Son is begotten of the Father, the only-begotten of the Father. John 1:14; 3:16. The Spirit is not begotten, but proceeds from the Father, is the Spirit of the Father, and is the Spirit of the Son, and is of the Son, and is sent by the Son. John 15:26; Romans 8:9, 14; 1 Pet. 1:11. But the words Father and Son, beget and begotten, are not to be overstrained. They are merely the fittest words to convey to our dull minds some just idea of the relation existing between the first and second persons of the Godhead.

V. No one denies the divinity of the Father. No one ought to deny the true and supreme divinity of the Son. Of him the Scripture says, "This is the true God and eternal life." 1 John 5:20. He "is over all, God blessed forever." Romans 9:5. "As the Father has life in himself,

so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." John 5:26. Thomas worshiped him, calling him "my Lord and my God." John 20:28. The world was made by the Son. Col. 1:16. It shall be destroyed by the Son. Heb 1:12. All men shall be judged by the Son. John 5:22, 27. Stephen, dying, prayed to him. Acts 7:59. The very highest worship of heaven is offered to him. Rev. 5:12, 13.

So also the Spirit of God is truly God. In Acts 5:3, 4, the Holy Spirit is expressly called God. The Spirit perfectly knows God, and so is God. 1 Cor. 2:10, 11. He is joined with the Father and the Son in the form of baptism, and in the apostolic benediction. Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.

VI. This doctrine is never to be so taught as to lead men to suppose that there are three Gods. We do not deny the unity of God. We glory in it. Nor do we hold that God is three in the same sense in which he is one, for that would be a contradiction. But he is one in being, in nature, in essence; and three in personality or subsistence. When John baptized our Lord, all three persons of the Trinity were present; "Lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:16, 17. So we find all three persons of the Godhead spoken of in John 14:26: "The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatever I have said unto you."

VII. As all three persons of the Godhead concurred in man's creation, so do they all concur in man's redemption. The Father gave the only-begotten Son. John 3:16. The Son laid down his life for his sheep. John 10:17, 18. The Spirit reproveth the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and guides God's people into all truth. John 16:8, 13. There is a wonderful and unspeakable communion of nature, attributes, and glory in the persons of the Godhead. Christ says of the Spirit: "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father

has are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:14, 15. It is the will of God that "all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father. He who honors not the Son honors not the Father who has sent him." John 5:23. Now if men refuse to honor the Son, and worship only the Father, or if they honor the Son not as the Son of God, but merely as a creature, they do displease him who sent his Son into the world. We must worship the trinity in unity, and unity in trinity. The doctrine here maintained relates therefore to the object of religious worship. The orthodox hold that we are to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All others worship God not as he is revealed in the Bible, but according to their own ideas. "This is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3. It is a remarkable fact, that men who hold the supreme divinity of Christ never deny the divinity of the Spirit.

VIII. We have hints of this doctrine of the trinity in the oldest writings of Scripture. In the first verse of Genesis the word rendered God is in the plural form. So in Job 35:10, the word Maker in the Hebrew is plural. So in Eccles. 12:1, the word Creator is in the plural. So in Isaiah 54:5, the words Maker and Husband are both in the plural. So in Mal. 1:6, the word Master is in the plural. Not only are nouns but pronouns found in the plural. In Gen. 1:26 we read; "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." See also Gen. 3:22. Many things like these are found in the Old Testament. Whatever arguments prove the divinity and personality of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, prove the doctrine of the trinity. For if each of these is a person, and each of them is divine, there is no more doubt of the trinity.

CREATION

I. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things

which do appear." Heb. 11:3. This passage of Scripture settles these points:

1. The universe was made—the worlds were framed.
2. This was done by the fiat of the Almighty—the word of God. Compare Psalm 33:6.
3. The world was not made out of pre-existent materials—the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.
4. We know all these things by faith. A fair inference from all this is that we are bound to own and to worship God as the Author of creation—the Maker of all things.

II. The progress of science, either truly or falsely so called, has given us no better insight into the origin of the universe than that afforded by the first chapter in the Bible. On the first day of creation God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The same day God divided the light from the darkness. On the second day of creation God spread out the skies, dividing the waters that flow on the earth from the waters which are held in the clouds and the atmosphere. On the third day he separated the waters of the earth from the dry land and produced all kinds of grass, herbs, and trees having seed and fruit. On the fourth day he arranged the lights in the heavens and appointed them for signs and seasons, for days and years. On the fifth day God created all manner of fish, and living creatures in the sea, and all creatures that fly in the open air and all fowls. On the sixth day God created creeping or prowling animals, beasts, and cattle. On the same day also he created man, male and female. One of the most remarkable statements respecting creation is that so often repeated, that when God reviewed his work, he declares that it was good—very good.

III. Many idle and unprofitable questions can easily be raised respecting the creation, as well as some learned questions, which, if

not wholly idle, are yet too deep for those for whom this work is written.

IV. If any ask, How is it possible that something could have been created out of nothing? the answer is that it could not but by the almighty power of God. There our faith must rest. Farther we cannot go. Farther we need not go. Omnipotence can effect anything that is not absurd.

V. We have no reason to suppose that there has been any change in the laws of nature since the creation was finished. Heavy objects have always fallen to the ground, water has always sought its own level, ascent has always been more difficult than descent, fire has always burned, and water has always put out fire ever since the world began, except when the laws of nature have been miraculously suspended.

VI. The historic account of the creation is given in the first chapter of Genesis. We have a poetic account of the same wonderful event in the one hundred and fourth Psalm. In other parts of Scripture are found many short statements respecting the same work. All of these take for granted the correctness of the historic account given by Moses.

VII. The illustration of the divine perfections found in the work of creation is very instructive. The power, wisdom and goodness thus brought to view are truly admirable. In studying the divine attributes several of these passages have been already considered. Others can easily be found. The dispositions of men, as to piety or impiety, are often discovered by their sentiments respecting creation. David was wonderfully stirred up by his thoughts concerning the heavens. A poet has said: "An undevout astronomer is mad."

Yet so brutish are some men in their knowledge, that even astronomy and anatomy make them prate like fools. In the height of his bodily sufferings the pious Halyburton said, "I bless God that ever I was

born." On the other hand the vain and giddy Voltaire, in the midst of the flatteries of kings and courtiers, said, "I wish I had never been born." Vile indeed is the heart, and dark indeed are the prospects of him who cannot give thanks for his own creation.

VIII. In the whole work of creation God was both sovereign and free. He might have made more worlds, and more orders of beings, he might have created the world sooner or later, if he had so chosen. He acted according to the counsel of his own will. Whatever he has done has been the dictate of his own will and wisdom.

IX. All creation was for the divine glory, and to the divine praise. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Romans 11:36. "You have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11.

X. The Scriptures use creation as a proof and illustration of the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus spoke the devout son of Hachaliah: "You, even you, are Lord alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and you preserve them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth you." Neh. 9:6. Compare Is. 45:7. Many parallel texts are easily found proving the divinity of the Father. John and Paul both establish the divinity of the Son of God by the work of creation. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;" "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him;" "By him God made the worlds." John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2. The Scriptures as clearly ascribe creation to the Spirit. Thus spoke Moses: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;" "By his Spirit he has garnished the heavens." Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13. Thus in the creative power and skill of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we find a blessed foundation for all the worship and adoration which we offer to the triune God.

XI. Inspired writers and devout men alike unite in giving great prominence to the goodness of God manifested in creation. Not a creature nor organ of life has yet been found containing proofs of malignity in its Author. Surely this world was made by a benevolent Being, and should furnish songs of praises to its Creator.

XII. The unity of design found in creation well illustrates the unity of God. Surely he who made the eye, made the light. Surely he who made the ear, made the air by whose vibrations sound is carried. Surely he who made the water made the tribes of creatures that live in it. There is one God. There is no need of more than one God. There is but one God. He is Lord of all.

XIII. So far as we know, God has at no time made but two races of rational and accountable beings—angels and men. Angels were made before men, for they sang when this world was made. All the sons of God shouted for joy. Job 38:7. Both angels and men are immortal. Man is lower than the angels. Psalm 8:5. Both races were made to glorify God. Some angels are greater than others. Eph. 1:21; 3:10. Some angels and all mere men become sinners. The lost angels are lost forever. Matt. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4.

PROVIDENCE

I. Providence is the care of God over his creatures. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.

II. To deny providence is as truly atheistic as to deny God's existence. One who neither sees, nor hears, nor knows, nor cares, nor helps, nor saves, is no God at all. No right-minded man could worship such a being.

III. Both the Old and New Testaments declare with great frequency God's providence over the world. In the hand of the Lord is "the soul

of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." "In him we live, and move, and have our being." "The Lord God omnipotent reigns." Job 12:10; Acts 17:28; Rev. 19:6. Pious men of all ages have been very much agreed on the general doctrine of providence. They have felt that the world may as well be without a God as to have one who controls it not.

IV. God's providence partakes of his own excellent nature. Because he is supreme and holy and just and good and wise and kind and almighty; his government is irresistible, kind, wise, good, just, holy, and over all. Nothing escapes the divine notice. Living creatures invisible to the naked eye as well as the great sea monsters alike evince his presence and his power. He never slumbers nor sleeps. He calls the stars by their names. That which is to us chance is to him matter of exact arrangement. Eccles. 9:11; Proverbs 16:33. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains. Psalm 76:10. His providence is not extemporaneous and conducted by a plan formed from day to day, but by a plan fixed and settled according to a holy, wise, and eternal purpose. Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9. God does not change his plan: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46:10.

V. Very remarkable is the long-suffering of God's providence. For their sins God might justly and instantly cut men down; but his long-suffering prevails, and the guilty are spared so as to have time for repentance.

VI. The Scriptures forewarn us that God's doings will often confound us: "Your judgments are a great deep." "Your way is in the sea, and your path in the great waters, and your footsteps are not known." Psalm 36:6; 77:19. God saves or he destroys, by few or by many, by the strong or by the weak, by friend or by foe. He is on the right hand, but we perceive him not. None are more surprised than wicked men when God brings their conduct to its natural end. Nor does he give account of any of his doings. Often he does not even give us notice when he is about to effect his greatest wonders. He hangs the

earth upon nothing. He often seems to hang the destiny of empires upon a thing of naught. Both his means and his instruments are commonly such as man would reject. God sees order where we see but confusion, and light where we see but darkness. He has as perfect control over invisible agents as he has over things seen by men. "His kingdom rules over all." Many think it vastly strange that God takes the poor from the ash-heap and sets them among princes, and pours contempt on noble birth, on prowess and on princes.

VII. There is something very wonderful in God's care of godly men. They often speak of it here. They will oftener speak of it hereafter. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in his way." Psalm 37:23. There is a wonderful connection between the prayers of saints and the providence of God. For thousands of years one good man after another has repeated the words of the Psalmist as applicable to himself: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm 34:6. It does not at all diminish the wonder of God's care of his people that he protects them without the interposition of miracles.

VIII. All the argument brought against providence from the apparent confusion in human affairs is easily enough answered. In this world nothing is finished, nothing is perfected. Let men wait until they see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and the rich sinner beyond the reach of hope, and they will not doubt that there is a God that judges in the earth.

IX. In one respect providence is a continual exhibition of creative energy. "You send forth your Spirit, they are created: and you renew the face of the earth." Psalm 104:30. Every man on earth is as truly the creature of God as was Adam in the garden of Eden.

X. It seems strange that any should limit, or wish to limit the control of God over free agents. The Scriptures clearly show that God as much governs the free acts of malignant men as he does material causes. It is true that both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the

Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together; but it was for to do whatever God's hand and God's counsel determined before to be done. Acts 4:27, 28. No power had they against Jesus except as the Almighty lengthened their chain. John 19:11. "Our God is in the heavens: he has done whatever he has pleased." Psalm 115:3. None can stay his hand. Dan. 4:35.

XI. Sometimes our minds dwell on great affairs and the vastness of the universe until we almost doubt whether the Most High cares for little things. But when we take the microscope and look at the vast numbers of little creatures too small to be perceived by the naked eye; we find his wisdom, power, and goodness to them as manifest as towards creatures of the greatest size and beauty. And when we look at the Scriptures the same doctrine is abundantly taught: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows." Matt. 10:29-31. Some have said that the care of so many things, great and small, could not be expected of God. They forget that to create and neglect would be indeed a blot on the divine character, and that it is no labor to the Almighty to take infinite care of his creatures. "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. The eyes of all wait upon you; and you give them their meat in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." Psalm 145:9, 15, 16.

XII. This doctrine of providence cuts up by the roots the spirit of self-sufficiency and vain-boasting. "What have you that you have not received?" "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." "It is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." 1 Cor. 4:7; Jas. 1:17; Phil. 2:13.

XIII. In the church below and in the church above, the doctrine of providence fills pious hearts with joy and pious mouths with praise. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be

glory forever. Amen." "Alleluia: For the Lord God omnipotent reigns." Romans 11:36; Rev. 19:6.

MAN A SINNER

I. Man is a creature of God. Reason proves this; Scripture asserts it. Gen. 1:27; 5:1; Eccles. 12:1, 7; Mal. 2:10; Zech. 12:1. These passages claim that God is not only the framer of our bodies, but the Father of our spirits. We are entirely the creatures of God.

II. God made man pure in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24. "Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Eccles. 7:29. God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:1. The image of God and the likeness of God mean the same thing. They both denote a similitude. This likeness is either natural or moral. The natural image of God consists in intelligence. The moral image of God consists in holiness. Man has lost God's moral image, but retains somewhat of his natural image. Gen. 9:6.

III. All men of whatever color or nationality are of one race, and had a common origin. "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Acts 17:26. Compare Gen. 3:20; 9:19; Romans 5:12, 19; 1 Cor. 15:22.

IV. In creating our first parents, God made our father Adam before he made our mother Eve. This is noticed in the Scriptures as worthy of attention and instructive. 1 Cor. 11:8, 9; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14. The woman was last made, but she was the first to sin.

V. It seems to be God's plan to subject all the rational beings he has made to a trial or probation. Thus the angels were tried, and some of them fell. Thus man was tried, and he fell. His trial was very fair. It was as slight as it could be, to be a test at all. It was simply abstaining

from one kind of fruit in the garden. Of the rest he might eat. Gen. 2:16, 17. How long man stood before he fell we do not know, and it is idle to inquire. By his fall man became liable to all penal evil, for that is the meaning of the word death when used on this subject. An immediate effect of man's sin was his expulsion from Paradise. But he was not driven out in a hopeless manner. He had a gospel promise made him, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Gen. 3:15.

VI. The effects of the fall on the posterity of our first parents are just the same as on Adam and Eve. The earth still brings forth thorns and thistles. In the sweat of man's face he still eats his bread, and finally returns to the dust. Gen. 3:18,19. The sorrow of woman is just the same as that which came upon Eve. Gen. 3:16.

VII. All men come into the world in a state of guilt, and thus, exposure to wrath. Indeed the Bible says in so many words that we are "by nature the children of wrath even as others." Eph. 2:3. It says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." It further says, that "through the offence of one many are dead." "The judgment was by one to condemnation." "By one man's offence death reigned by one." "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Romans 5:12, 15-19. Language can hardly be clearer or less liable to mistake.

VIII. Another effect of the fall was the depravity of man's nature. So that there is none righteous, no, not one. Romans 3:10. Bitterly does David bewail his own native depravity: "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalm 51:5. Compare Job 14:4; John 3:6; Gen. 6:5. On the universal depravity of the race the Bible speaks but one language. In Romans 1:19-32, Paul proves the Gentiles to be sinners. In Romans 2:11-29, he proves that the Jews are sinners; and in Romans 3:10-23, he proves that the whole race of man is apostate from God. He relies on the prophets of the Old Testament. He might have quoted many more than he did.

IX. In his natural state man is full of spiritual darkness. The very light that is in him, is darkness. Matt. 6:23. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. In order to salvation, man as much needs divine instruction as he does pardon or renewal; and it is great grace in God to promise to teach all his children. Isaiah 54:13.

X. By nature man is in a state of misery; and yet he knows not that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and has need of all things. Rev. 3:17. All the sinful passions are in their nature tormenting. A guilty conscience is the worst scourge ever felt. Speaking of the wicked, God says, "Destruction and misery are in their ways." Even if a man's conscience is seared as with a hot iron, there is no telling when his tumults will be terrific. It was so with Belshazzar. Dan. 5:9. It was so with Herod. Matt. 14:2.

XI. By nature man is helpless. He cannot atone for a single sin. The redemption of the soul is precious. Psalm 49:8. It costs too much to be redeemed with silver and gold, with tears or human sacrifices, or with any corruptible things. It can be redeemed alone with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Pet. 1:19. Nor can man turn himself to God by any power that is within him. We are expressly said to be "without strength," and to be "the servants of sin." Romans 5:6; 6:17. "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." By nature we are polluted in our blood. Ezek. 16:6. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. The dead cannot raise themselves, and men are dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1.

XII. The whole nature of man is affected by sin. The understanding is darkened; the will is corrupt; the conscience is defiled; the memory is polluted; the imagination is depraved; the throat is an open sepulcher; the tongue is deceitful; the poison of asps is under the lips; the mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; the feet are swift to shed blood; the eyes are full of adultery; the heart is deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked. Men yield their members servants to uncleanness. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. "From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness--only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil." Isaiah 1:6. See Romans 3:10-18; 6:19.

XIII. The very names given to sin should awaken in us uneasiness and alarm. Sin means a missing of the mark. It is transgression. It is lack of conformity to law. It is iniquity. It is unrighteousness. It is evil. It is wrong. It is hateful to God. It deserves all the evil threatened against it or brought upon it. It has dug every grave. It fills hell with groans.

XIV. Sin when finished brings forth death. Because Satan was a seducer he was a murderer. John 8:44. It is possible to sin beyond forgiveness. Matt. 12:32.

THOUGH MAN IS A SINNER, YET HE MAY BE SAVED

I. We have seen that man is by nature ruined. The Bible says he is lost. Matt. 15:24; Luke 19:10; 2 Cor. 4:3. Men are sinners, wicked, ungodly, unrighteous, corrupt, deceitful, vile, ungrateful. The Bible calls them dross, Psalm 119:119; reprobate silver, that is, silver rejected after trial, Jer. 6:30; they are given over to a reprobate mind, Romans 1:28; they are the children of the wicked one, and his lusts will they do, John 8:44; they are the slaves of iniquity, Romans 6:20; they are in error, Jas. 5:20; in darkness, 1 John 2:11; they are out of the way, Romans 3:12; Heb. 5:2.

II. Lost as men are, they may yet be saved. There is a way of life, a door of hope, a scheme of mercy, a plan of salvation. Jesus came into the world on the very errand of saving the lost. Matt. 18:11. Christ was anointed and set apart to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. God's device of

mercy for rescuing the lost is set forth by various terms. Of these perhaps none is more fit than that of a covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace. When Jeremiah foretold gospel times, he said: "The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34. This way of presenting the plan of salvation is adopted by Paul also. Heb. 10:16,17.

III. The scheme for saving sinners is wholly from God. He devised it; he executed it; he applies it. So the Scriptures teach: "Salvation belongs unto the Lord." "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." "He is the God of our salvation." "He who is our God is the God of salvation." He says, "My own arm brought salvation." "Salvation is of the Lord." Psalm 3:8; 37:39; 65:5; 68:19, 20; Isaiah 63:5; Jonah 2:9. Very careful is God to let us know that there was nothing in us to merit his esteem: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins." Isaiah 43:25. Compare Isaiah 48:9. Again, "Thus says the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake . . . Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you." Ezek. 36:22, 32.

IV. All this love and pity are wholly undeserved. No man has any claim on the score of his own deservings for any good things. On this point the Bible is very clear. It says: "But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive

with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. By grace you are saved! He also raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavens, in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:4-9. It is the grace of God that brings salvation. The whole plan is "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Eph. 1:6. Salvation is no debt due to any man. Romans 4:4, 16. Neither is it possible for a creature to have a good standing before God, partly on the ground of personal merit, and partly on the ground of undeserved kindness. The two schemes are entirely inconsistent. So Paul taught: "If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6.

V. All this grace is in Christ, and in none else. God has given him "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Isaiah 42:6, 7. Nor has he given any other to the same end and purpose. A great prophet says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King comes unto you: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an donkey." Zech. 9:9. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David: as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." Luke 1:69, 70. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Jesus himself says, "I am the Door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man comes unto the Father but by me." John 10:9; 14:6.

VI. This plan of salvation meets all the demands of law and justice. He who is at the head of it is the Lord our Righteousness. Jer. 23:6. So that everyone who truly believes on Jesus Christ "shall receive the

blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Psalm 24:5. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. God "has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

VII. Some deliverances otherwise great are but temporary; but the salvation secured to believers is endless and boundless. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." Isaiah 45:17.

VIII. Another excellence of this whole scheme is that it is freely, urgently, and indiscriminately offered to men, and pressed upon their consideration. All true ministers of the gospel are clothed with salvation. 2 Chron. 6:41; Psalm 132:16. The true heralds of the gospel scheme are described in the most beautiful language of inspired poetry. Isaiah 52:7-9. All sorts of men are called to embrace the gospel. Isaiah 55:1-9.

IX. Surely men ought to rejoice in such mercy as is offered in the gospel. Psalm 35:9; 116:13; Isaiah 25:9. The hope of this salvation is a very important part of the panoply of God. It is the helmet of the Christian soldier. Eph. 6:17; 1 Thess. 5:8.

X. The danger of despising this glorious scheme, this plan of salvation, must be exceedingly great. The error of the Israelites who perished in the wilderness was, that they forsook God and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation. Deut. 32:15. Daniel says, "Salvation is far from the wicked; for they seek not your statutes." Psalm 119:155. "He who believes on the Son of God is not condemned; but he who believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John 3:18.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD AND THE SON OF MAN

I. Christianity takes its name from its author, the Lord Jesus Christ. A human frame without head or heart would not be more monstrous or useless than a system of religion designed for sinners without a Christ—an anointed Savior. A "Christless Christianity "is an absurdity. To every man, therefore, these are solemn questions: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" Matt. 22:42.

II. Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. This statement is not contradictory, for he is both God and man. He is the Son of God as to his divine nature, and the Son of Man as to his human nature. As the Son of God, he was in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18; he was in heaven, John 3:13; he is with all worshiping assemblies, Matt. 18:20; he was before all things Col. 1:17. As the Son of Man, he was born, Matt. 2:1; he increased in stature and wisdom, Luke 2:52; he was sorrowful, Matt. 26:37; he died, Matt. 27:50; and rose again, Matt. 28:7. No saved man denies that this union of Christ's natures is a great mystery; but then it is a mystery to be gloried in: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16.

III. Christ is often called the Son, the Son of the Blessed, the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. He is called God's own Son, Romans 8:32; God's dear Son, Col. 1:13; God's one Son, his well-beloved, Mark 12:6; his beloved Son, Matt. 3:13; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Pet. 1:17. It would be easy to fill many pages with texts in which he is called the Son of God. By his miraculous birth he is proven to be the Son of God, Luke 1:35; by his resurrection he is powerfully declared to be the Son of God, Romans 1:4; he is shown to be the Son of God by his glorious exaltation, Heb. 1:3-5. He existed as the Son of God before he was born on earth, for "God sent forth his

Son." Gal. 4:4. He did not become God's Son by being sent; but being God's Son, he was sent.

IV. Christ is God's Son in the highest possible sense. Adam was God's son, because he was made by God without having any parents according to the flesh. Luke 3:38. Pious men are God's sons by a gracious adoption. 1 John 3:1. Holy angels are God's sons, because they have no parents of their own nature. But Jesus Christ is God's Son, because God is his Father who begat him. Psalm 2:7; Heb. 1:5; 5:5. No less than five times is Christ declared to be the only begotten Son of God. John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9. God is the Father of Christ in a sense in which he is the Father of none else. No mere creature has life in himself as the Son of God has life in himself. John 5:26. Nor does any creature know the Father as the Son knows him, nor does any know the Son but the Father. Luke 10:22. So that Christ's sonship is and should be confessed to be incomprehensible and ineffable.

V. At least one gospel and one epistle were written for the very purpose of convincing men that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. John 20:31; 1 John 5:13. A belief in Christ's sonship with God is an element in saving faith. 1 John 5:5. If a man denies the Son, he dishonors him and his Father also: "Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father." 1 John 2:23.

VI. The greatest and most happy effects flow from Christ being the Son of God, and from our belief of that truth. As Son he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8. The greatness of Christ's priesthood consisted very much in his being the Son of God. Heb. 4:14; 7:28. So glorious is the Son that he counted it not robbery to be equal with God. Phil:2:6. He declared it was right and a duty to honor the Son as we honor the Father. John 5:23.

VII. But Christ is not only the true God and eternal life, 1 John 5:20, he is also truly the Son of Man. The Creator and the creature are united in the one person of Christ. Simeon saw and handled the

infant of days, who was also the Father of eternity. "He is not only perfect God, but perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." Christ as God sought and formed a union with human nature. Christ's human nature had no personal subsistence by itself. His divine nature continues divine. His human nature cannot cease to be human.

VIII. In man's constitution there is a soul and a body. In Christ's constitution there are two natures. These are not changed the one into the other; nor are they confounded, nor are they mixed, but remain distinct. And yet there is but one person of the Mediator. The condescension of the Son of God in becoming the Son of Man was indeed wonderful. The Scriptures celebrate it: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9.

IX. Christ's manner of taking human nature was miraculous. Prophecy required this: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14. The very first gospel promise ever made declared that the Redeemer should be "the Seed of the woman." Gen. 3:15. Christ had no father according to the flesh. He was the Seed of Abraham and the Seed of David in this sense, that his mother was descended from those ancient worthies. This is all that is there taught.

X. Of Christ's being a man there is no doubt. The prophet Daniel styled him the Son of Man. Dan. 7:13. The New Testament often calls him a man. More than sixty times does he call himself the Son of Man. He had all the innocent infirmities of a man. He wept; he was hungry; he was sorrowful; he rejoiced; he was weary; he died. If Jesus Christ did not prove himself to be truly a man, having both a soul and a body, no one ever proved himself to be a man.

XI. There is no more important truth than this, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This truth makes glad millions of hearts in heaven

and in earth. Upon it hang all the good hopes of man for eternal life. Christ becoming incarnate made sure to mortals the work of salvation. He is mighty to save; he is able to save; he is willing to save.

XII. Let no one be offended at this great mystery. Simeon spoke by the Spirit the simple truth when he said: "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:34. Unto those who believe he is precious; but unto those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. 1 Pet. 2:7, 8. As men regard and treat the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, the Christ of God--so are they saved or lost. If they believe not in him, they shall die in their sins. John 8:24. The aversion of the natural man to the person and work of Jesus Christ is dreadful. John 5:40; 6:44. Nothing is more foolish, yet nothing is more perverse or stubborn than unbelief. It is the master sin. It is the great damning sin of all who perish in a gospel land.

XIII. This God-man, Christ Jesus, shall judge the world. At his tribunal we must all stand. Romans 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son. John 5:22, 27. In the sublime account Christ has given of the last day, the only Judge named is the Son of Man in his glory, called more than once the King. Matt. 25:31-46. He who is truly wise will make friends with the Judge before that great and dreadful day.

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

I. No one can read the Scriptures without seeing that great prominence is given to Christ Jesus in the plan of salvation. He is there said to be the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Author and Finisher of faith. He is the Shepherd of souls, the Fountain of living waters, the Head of the church, the bright and

morning Star, the Rose of Sharon, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Paul was so taken with him that he "determined not to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2.

II. To the Old Testament church he was known by such names and titles as the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel of the Lord, Wonderful, Counselor, the righteous Branch, the Messiah or Anointed. He is also there called the Mighty God, and the Lord Almighty. Isaiah 6:3; 9:6. In the New Testament his personal name is Jesus, or Savior. Matt. 1:2; Luke 2:21. His official name is Christ, or Anointed One. He is also called Emmanuel, or God with us. He is often called God and Lord.

III. A mediator is one that comes in between parties who are at variance, in order to reconcile them. Where there is no variance there can be no mediation. "A mediator is not the mediator of one; but God is one." Gal. 3:20. If there are no parties there can be no mediator. A mediator differs from an advocate, because the latter, strictly speaking, looks to the interest of one alone, while the former has a regard to both. Christ is called the Mediator of the new covenant, the Mediator of a better covenant, and the Mediator of the New Testament. Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. In the Old Testament a mediator is called a daysman.

IV. It is right and fit, perhaps it is necessary, that a mediator should be the equal of both parties. Jesus Christ has this fitness for his work. He can lay his hand both upon God and sinners. He knows God's will and God's rights. He knows man's sins and man's wants. He will not betray either party. It is no robbery for him to claim equality with God. Phil. 2:6.

V. Strifes and controversies are of three kinds.

1. Such as arise merely from mistakes;
2. Such as result from wrong on both sides;
3. Such as come from wrong on one side only.

Man's controversy with God is of the last class. Man alone is to blame. Man alone has done wrong. The Lord's ways are equal. It is man's ways that are not equal. Compare Ezek. 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20.

VI. Jesus Christ is the sole Mediator of the new covenant. So says Paul: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. If it is wicked to believe in two or more Gods, it is no less wicked to believe in two or more Mediators. Moses is once called a mediator. Gal. 3:19. The history of the event there referred to shows that the meaning is simply this, that he was a messenger to make known God's will to Israel, and to make known the desires of the people to God. The passage refers to the giving of the law, when the display of the divine majesty was so terrible that Israel said to Moses, "Speak you with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exod. 20:19. In mediation between God and sinners, so as to secure salvation, there is no Mediator but Christ. Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11.

VII. The great end of Christ's mediation is the salvation of his people. So said the angel that announced his birth: "You shall call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. "Christ is the head of church; and he is the Savior of the body." Eph. 5:23. As a Mediator he is no respecter of persons. Birth, blood, riches, honors, color, nationality, are nothing with him. He utterly disregards all distinctions made by are or by man's device. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:28. "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love." Gal. 5:6.

VIII. The necessity for a mediator is found in the holiness and justice of God, and in the fears, guilt, and miseries of man. God is so holy that he cannot look upon iniquity. Hab. 1:13. And how can man, left to himself, be just with God? Job 9:2. No two things are more

contrary to each other, than the vileness of man and the purity of God.

IX. To the office of Mediator Jesus Christ was chosen by his Father. Isaiah 42:1; 1 Pet. 2:4. Nor was any other ever chosen by God to the same work. He was no intruder into his office. His Father repeatedly declared himself well pleased in Christ and with his undertaking. His raising him from the dead and exalting him at his own right hand, was the highest possible proof that in Christ he was well pleased. God greatly honored Moses when he buried him in a secret place; but he never set Moses at his right hand.

X. It is a great thing to live under Christ's mediation. Through him we have wonderful discoveries of the character and glory of God. Through him heavenly influences are sent down to draw us to God. Never were there so glorious proposals made to creatures as are found in the offers of life and salvation. To those who accept the mediation of Jesus Christ, the very richest blessings are given. Thus says Paul to believers: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's: and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:21-23. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:17, 18. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5:1. "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. All these countless blessings are made sure to him who accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as all his hope and all his salvation. Eternity itself will not exhaust the unsearchable riches of Christ made sure to believers.

XI. It is a solemn thing to live under the gospel. No man can despise the mediation of Jesus Christ without incurring the greatest guilt,

and exposing himself to the greatest peril. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation! which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." Heb. 2:2-4. There is nothing more sinful or dangerous than treading under foot the Son of God, treating his blood as an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Heb. 10:28, 29.

CHRIST A PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

I. The office work of Christ is commonly expressed by three titles, Prophet, Priest, King. This distinction of his work is not a human invention. It is made in the word of God. It helps us in forming clear ideas of the greatness of his salvation. In no other one mentioned in Scripture are all these offices found united. The high priests of Israel were both priests and prophets. David was both a king and a prophet. Melchizedec was both a king and a priest. But Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King.

II. Of old he was spoken of as a PROPHET. Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up unto you a prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall hearken." And the Lord said: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth," etc. Deut. 18:15, 18. Jesus was a "prophet mighty in deed and word, before God, and all the people." Luke 24:19. He was eminently fitted to be a Counselor. Isaiah 9:6. He was the "one Shepherd" of the great prophet by the river Chebar. Ezek. 34:23. It was his Spirit who taught the Old Testament church. 1 Pet. 1:1. It is he who also teaches the Christian church, sending his ministers to that end. Eph. 4:8-13. When he came he spoke with authority: "I say unto you;" "I say unto you." He was the Author of grace and truth. John 1:17. It is he who opens the heart so that men attend to the things of salvation. Acts 16:14. He teaches effectually.

III. Christ is also a PRIEST, a great High Priest. He is made a priest by an oath, the oath of his Father. Psalm 110:4. To this office he was divinely called. "No man takes this honor unto himself, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but He who said unto him, You are my Son, today have I begotten you." Heb. 5:4, 5. Great exaltation was predicted

of Christ as a Priest: "He shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a Priest upon his throne." Zech. 6:13. For this great office Christ was wonderfully qualified: "Such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself." Heb. 7:26, 27.

IV. Under the law the high priest was required to offer sacrifices, to intercede, and to bless. So our High Priest by once offering himself has rendered forever unnecessary any other sacrifice for his people. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. 9:28. "He is able also to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. His third work as priest is to bless his redeemed. This he will do in due time, for "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. He has told us the very words he will use on that august occasion: "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

V. "This man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who has built the house has more honor than the house." Heb. 3:3. Upon this great exaltation of our High Priest is based the warning: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. 3:12.

VI. Christ is also a KING. A great King, King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the name written on his vesture and on his thigh. Rev. 19:16. By the prophet David the Lord said, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Psalm 2:6. When the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, they said, "Where is he who was born King of the Jews?" Matt. 2:2. He is also called a King, fairer than the children of men, with grace poured into his lips, and his throne is said to be

forever and ever. Psalm 45:1, 2, 6. In Solomon's Song he is also called a King. Cant. 1:4. One prophet within the space of a few verses calls him both Lord and Priest. Psalm 110:1-4.

VII. Such a Savior was demanded by our sad necessities. Our ignorance called for a great teacher. It was very gracious in God to promise, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children." Isaiah 54:13. Our guilt called for just such a glorious sacrifice as that of Calvary. "By one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. So we also needed a blessed king who should be able to subdue our corruptions. His people are willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness. Psalm 110:3. Under him is fulfilled the promise to the church: "In righteousness shall you be established: you shall be far from oppression; for you shall not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near you." Isaiah 54:14.

VIII. Sometimes all the work of the Mediator is expressed under a single figure, that of a Shepherd. Psalm 23:1-4; John 10:1-18. Sometimes his whole work is expressed in a single verse, as where it is said that Christ Jesus is of God "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

IX. Though we distinguish between the offices of Christ, they are never separated. He is always Prophet, always Priest, and always King, and will be so forever. So say the Scriptures: "The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Rev. 7:17. There is the prophetic office of Christ executed to his people long after their conflicts on earth are ended. "You are a Priest forever," says the oath of God in Psalm 110:4. And Paul says that he is a Priest, "after the power of an endless life," and "that this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood." Heb. 7:16, 24. Nor is there the least change in his character and purposes. His resurrection and ascension to heaven made a great change in his state so that he can no longer be spit upon, nor crowned with thorns, nor crucified, nor

buried. But in his nature and character he is still "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Heb. 13:8. His kingly office is alike perpetual: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of justice. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; this is why God, Your God, has anointed You, rather than Your companions, with the oil of joy. And: In the beginning, Lord, You established the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands; they will perish, but You remain. They will all wear out like clothing; You will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like a robe. But You are the same, and Your years will never end." Hebrews 1:8-12. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HIS OFFICES

Having spoken of the offices of Christ as Mediator, let us consider his glory therein:

I. His glory as a PROPHET. He spoke with authority, and not as the scribes. He spoke with such power that the very men sent to arrest him were disarmed. When asked how this was, all they could answer was, "Never man spoke like this man." John 7:46. Those who heard him felt that the Searcher of hearts was speaking to them. As he himself was truth, all he said was true, and he was its author. He was also the substance of truth. He made known to us the true nature of God. He said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9. Nor did any one else ever so reveal the true nature of God: "Neither knows any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. 1:27. The reason why that which was spoken by the prophets was good and pure, was because they spoke by the Spirit of Christ. 1 Pet. 1:11. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6. As he who builds a house has more honor than the house, so Christ is more glorious than the greatest prophet, who was a mere man. Heb. 3:3.

As a prophet Christ has great power. He savingly impresses his lessons by the "exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Eph. 1:19. As he said to Lazarus, Come forth, and the dead obeyed him; so he says to the soul sunk in ignorance and dead in trespasses and sins, and it hears the voice of the Son of God and lives. John 5:25. As the great teacher of his church Christ transmits to others power to teach the same blessed truths with authority; and in his name greater things are done than were done by him in person. John 14:12.

There is also glorious fullness and completeness in the teachings of Christ. He keeps back nothing that is profitable for us. He calls us friends, and treats us as such: "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." John 15:15. Christ has always been the Light of the world; and his light is the life of men. John 1:4-9. To him gave all the prophets witness. His glory shone out illustriously in his first miracle. John 2:11. As a prophet Christ taught us by his example also. John 13:15. His example was faultless. It showed us what he meant by his words. It proved that he enjoined nothing that could not be done. In all dispensations the power of Christ's truth has been made resistless by the Holy Spirit.

II. Let us dwell a little on Christ's glory as a PRIEST. None so great ever filled that office before or since the Mediator held it. His person was most glorious, being truly divine. Never was such a sacrifice made as that made on Calvary. His whole person made the offering. None deny that he died on the cross. But prophecy required that his soul should be made an offering for sin, and have bitter travail. Isaiah 53:10, His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, even before he was brought into the judgment-hall. Matt. 26:38. The reason was, he was treading the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone.

None was so faultless as he. Heb. 7:26, 27. He magnified the law and made it honorable, as prophecy said he would. Isaiah 42:21. His entire human nature was offered upon the altar of his divine nature,

and thus his sacrifice was very glorious. It was a ransom—a full ransom-price for those whom he would redeem. Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6. He glorified his Father so as no one else ever honored God. The union of his natures was so close that what he did and suffered in his human nature is spoken of as if it had been done and suffered in his divine nature. Acts 20:28. We fitly speak of him as a divine sufferer, though we do not mean that his divinity suffered, but only that the Divine Redeemer suffered in his human nature. The effect of such a priestly offering we should expect to be great on those who believe in it; and so it is. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:38, 39. The beloved disciple says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

Other sacrifices never made perfect the worshiper as pertaining to the conscience. Heb. 9:9. All that the offerings made under the law of Moses did, was to purify the flesh—to make men ceremonially fit worshipers. "The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." Hebrews 9:13-15. It is by his spotless life and amazing death that believers have the righteousness of God without the law; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all those who believe. They are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:21-24.

III. Let us view Christ's glory as KING. He deserves all his royal honors. Isaiah 52:13; 53:12; 49:4. On this point Paul is very clear. He says of Christ, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:6-11.

Christ's kingly power is vast. On his head are many crowns. Rev. 19:12. Long ago his Father gave him the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Psalm 2:8. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Psalm 72:8. Christ's kingdom is the more glorious because it is spiritual, and not carnal. He said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. Nor shall this kingdom ever fade away. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." Psalm 45:6. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." 2 Sam. 7:13. "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:33. So glorious is Zion's King, that he makes all his people kings and priests unto God! Rev. 1:6. As head of the church he alone is King. 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:22; 4:5. He shall never be superseded, but abides ever over the house of God; Heb. 10:21 and is heir of all things. Heb. 1:2-4.

MEN MUST ACCEPT CHRIST AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

I. Every reader of the Bible will admit that the Scriptures say a great deal about believing. The faith which the Lord demands is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It believes whatever God has spoken.

Saving faith chiefly regards Christ as the author of eternal life. It is as fatal to deny the Son as it is to deny the Father. 1 John 2:23.

II. The necessity of faith is taught in all the Scriptures. Against no sin does the word of God speak in stronger terms of condemnation than against the sin of unbelief. "The Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be before they believe me for all the signs which I have showed among them?" Numb. 14:11. "A fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." Psalm 78:21, 22. To his captious enemies our Lord said, "John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and you, when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him." Matt. 21:32. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." John 3:19.

III. Very urgently does the Scripture require men to believe. "The Lord said unto Moses, Lo I come unto you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." Exod. 19:9. So Jehoshaphat said, "Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established." 2 Chron. 20:20. "You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he." Isaiah 43:10. Many like phrases have we, such as, "Have faith in God;" "Put on the breastplate of faith;" "Follow faith," etc.

IV. Indeed, no greater question can be asked than this, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" John 9:35. Happy is he who can answer in the affirmative, "Lord, I believe." John 9:38. For "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he who comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:6.

V. So clearly does the human conscience perceive that on proper evidence men ought to believe, that Christ's bitterest enemies did not pretend that they were under no obligation to believe, but pleaded that they lacked evidence. Even when he was hanging on the cross, they said: "If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Matt. 27:42. Compare Mark 15:32. If he had come down from the cross, the sins of men would not have been atoned. But he did a greater thing. He laid down his life, and thus put away sin, and then burst the bars of death, rising from the grave. Did they then believe him? No. They gave large money to men to say that his disciples stole him away. The human conscience concurs with the Savior in teaching that it is only fools who are slow of heart to believe. Luke 24:25.

VI. The obligation to believe is announced throughout the Scriptures. "After John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:14, 15. Indeed, in so many words the beloved disciple says: "This is his commandment: That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another." 1 John 3:23. When men said to Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" he answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent." John 6:28, 29.

VII. The common form of making a profession of Christianity seems to have been a declaration of faith in Christ. Thus Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16:6. Thus Martha: "Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." John 11:27. Thus the Ethiopian: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:37.

VIII. True saving faith is the gift of God, and is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. The disciples of Achaia, who helped Aquila and Priscilla so much, "had believed through grace." Acts 18:27. In Gal. 5:22 faith is expressly said to be "the fruit of the Spirit." To the

Philippians Paul says: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29. And when Peter made that blessed confession of Christ above cited, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 16:17.

IX. Everywhere in Scripture faith is spoken of as essential to salvation: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believes not shall be damned." Mark 16:16. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house." Acts 16:31. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe." 1 Cor. 1:21. "We who have believed do enter into rest." Heb. 4:3. "We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. 10:39.

X. The Scriptures were written to beget faith in Christ, and a hearty belief of the gospel. John 20:31; 1 John 5:13. If, on the evidence and aids given us, we fail to believe, the whole plan of the gospel is, as to us, in vain.

XI. God has taken great care and used proper means to beget in men lively faith in Christ--the sum and author of the gospel. To this end he permitted Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, to die, and caused him to rise again that they might believe that God had sent his Son. John 11:42. To the same end the treachery of Judas was both permitted and predicted, that the disciples might believe that Jesus was the Christ. John 13:19. The Lord foretold his own death and resurrection to the same end. John 14:29. He also often called on men to have faith in him: "You believe in God, believe also in me." "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." John 14:1, 11. In the same connection he says that faith in him is the great cure for heart trouble. He prays for the unity of his people to the end that men may be convinced of his divine nature and mission.

XII. True, firm faith has great efficacy in securing answers to prayer. Mark 11:24; John 14:14.

XIII. To all who truly believe, the Lord Jesus is very dear. 1 Pet. 2:7.

XIV. Real, lively faith is very important to preachers who would fearlessly do their duty. "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4:13. Without this faith, a preacher is a poor, useless creature—a reed shaken with the wind.

XV. The hinderances to faith are all found in the depravity of the human heart, and in its foolish love of honor, wealth, or sinful pleasure. John 5:44; 1 John 2:15; 5:5.

XVI. True faith is very pleasing to God: "The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:27. Compare John 20:29.

XVII. The most blessed effects accompany faith, such as adoption into God's family, John 1:12; justification, Acts 13:39; Romans 3:21-26; Gal. 3:6, and many places; and life, eternal life, Romans 10:10; John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:40.

XVIII. Unbelief is fatal to all good prospects for eternal happiness. John 3:18; Mark 16:16; 1 John 5:10.

XIX. Prayer for faith, for more faith--is a duty. Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5.

REPENTANCE

I. In their very nature, faith and repentance are closely united. One never exists without the other. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced"—there is faith; "and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son"—there is repentance. Zech. 12:10. Jesus in his preaching united these things: "Repent, and believe the gospel."

Mark 1:15. So did his apostles. See Acts 20:21. In the Scriptures both faith and repentance are required to salvation. Matt. 3:2; Acts 16:31. Repentance essentially belongs to the religion of sinners. Without it there is no true piety on earth. Luke 13:3, 5.

II. Many good writers call both faith and repentance conditions of salvation. They do not mean that there is any merit in either of these graces. They do not deserve God's favor. They are in no sense the price we pay for life and mercy. But without them we would not be saved; we could not please God. If the beggar would be nourished by the bread offered him, he must take it and eat it. If a title to an estate is offered to one, and he refuses to accept it, it is not his in fact or in law. The thirsty soul must not only know that there is water, but he must drink it, or his thirst will rage on.

III. True repentance is not a transient act of the mind, nor a temporary emotion. It is a glorious habit of the soul. It implies a fixed principle in the renewed mind. It is the hypocrite and self-deceiver who repents and sins, and continues to sin and repent. Genuine repentance produces a permanent change in men's characters.

IV. In Scripture much is said of repentance. It is mentioned in that very ancient poem, the book of Job. There are as many as seven penitential Psalms, namely, the 6th, 32d, 38th, 51st, 102d, 130th, and 143d. Indeed, some have thought that the 25th, 69th, and 86th, were also penitential Psalms. It is very much spoken of by the prophets, by Christ, by the evangelists and apostles.

V. When repentance is genuine, it is always the work of God's Spirit, and comes to us through the mediation of Christ, who is placed on the hill of Zion a Prince and a Savior to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins. Acts 5:31. When the Gentiles repented, it was by God's mercy and grace. Acts 11:18. The weeping prophet says, "Turn me, and I shall be turned: for you are the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote

upon my thigh." Jer. 31:18, 19. In his repentance David felt so keenly his dependence on divine grace, that he cried very earnestly, "Take not your Holy Spirit from me." Psalm 51:11. On that occasion his first expression of hope was this: "In the hidden part you shall make me to know wisdom." That is the best and last hope of any sinner, that he shall ever do better than he has done.

VI. Two kinds of repentance are often spoken of, legal and evangelical. In legal repentance the motives are chiefly drawn from the law and the consequences of sin. In evangelical repentance, they are drawn from the gospel and the nature of sin. The latter would turn from sin, if there were no hell; the former would sin on, if there was no fear of wrath. The goodness of God leads the latter to repentance; but the former despises the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering. Romans 2:4.

VII. True repentance embraces these things:

1. A knowledge of sin. When Nathan convinced David of his sin, he cried for mercy. Men will not repent of sins of which they think themselves innocent.

2. Humility, deep and genuine abasement of soul before God. The penitent says: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer you?" "O God, you know my foolishness." Job 40:4; Psalm 69:5. True penitents "know every man the plague of his own heart." 1 Kings 8:38.

3. Sincere and hearty confession of sin. "He who covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5. Compare Psalm 51:3; Jer. 3:13; 1 John 1:9.

4. Shame belongs to genuine repentance. So said David: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up." Psalm 40:2. So Ezra: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up

my face to you." Ezra 9:6. Compare Ezek. 36:31, 32. Nor does the pious blush cease when pardon comes. Far from it. Ezek. 16:63.

5. With shame is joined sorrow, ingenuous grief for sin. "Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of." 2 Cor. 7:9, 10. To these are added,

6. Self-loathing, self-abhorrence. Job 42:6; Ezek. 6:9; 20:43. Of course one thus exercised also has,

7. Hatred of sin, sin in every form. Psalm 66:18; 97:10; 119:104, 128. All these exercises are accompanied with

8. Love of holiness—a delight in the law of God after the inner man. Romans 7:22; Psalm 119:140. Such a great change leads to

9. An amendment of life, a thorough reformation, works meet for repentance. Matt. 3:8. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." Job 34:32.

VIII. Such repentance has rich and abundant promises made to it in all the Scriptures. It is called repentance unto life, because it ends in eternal happiness. Acts 11:18. It is more than once connected with the remission of sins. Mark 1:4; Acts 3:19. "He looks upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things works God oftentimes with man." Job 33:27-29. "Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:16-18. "Thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive

the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15.

Indeed, the Scriptures declare that God is never better pleased with anything he sees upon earth than he is with godly sorrow for sin. "You desire not sacrifice, else would I give it: you delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." Psalm 51:16, 17. In our Lord's great sermon on the mount the first thing he said was: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The next thing he said was like it: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:3, 4.

IX. Men cannot be in too much earnest in seeking repentance. Very tenderly does God call them to this work: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." And lest any should doubt the divine readiness to forgive so flagrant sins, the Lord shows why we may expect remission, adding: "For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. "Truly God is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3:9.

X. Very few men intend or expect to live and die without repentance. The very thought of such an end would make them shudder. Why will they defer repentance! Death is approaching. The Spirit is striving. Christ is inviting. Hell threatens. The gates of heaven are open. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

A CHANGE OF HEART

I. Faith and Repentance are proofs and properties of a new nature. This is also true of hope, love, joy, peace, patience, forbearance, temperance, meekness, gentleness, goodness, courage--and all the Christian graces. But Faith and Repentance occupy so prominent a place in the beginning and in the whole history of the Christian life, that it was deemed proper to give to each of them a distinct consideration. But this was done the better to open the way for the consideration of a change of heart.

II. It is clear from many parts of God's word that in the divine plan of mercy, a change of heart is required in order to salvation. It is called by various names, but, when fairly considered, they all lead us to the same conclusions respecting its nature and necessity. Let us consider some of the forms of speech used in Scripture to instruct us on this great subject.

III. Sometimes the great change we must undergo in order to salvation is expressed by God's pouring his Spirit upon us, putting his Spirit within us, thus anointing us to God, and thus making us temples of God. Read and compare Isaiah 44:3-5; Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16. When this change takes place, it is as when at the dedication of the temple "the glory of the Lord filled the house." 1 Kings 8:11. That day it became a temple, and must be treated as a holy place. If we regard the indwelling of God's Spirit as in a person, then that person was the Lord's, and should fearlessly and openly profess his love and fear of God.

IV. As sin consists very much in lack of conformity to law, or in lawlessness towards God, so the change of heart is sometimes well represented by "writing the law of God on the heart," so as to give to men a love for God's holy precepts, and giving them a heart to remember and practise all it requires: "After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 10:16. People thus wrought upon love to keep the commandments. Their aims and desires are holy.

V. The very core of depravity is hardness of heart, a dreadful lack of right sensibility. So the change of heart required of men is sometimes expressed by giving them true and proper tenderness swaying their whole nature: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony [or unfeeling] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." Ezek. 11:19. Compare Ezek. 36:26, 27. Jer. 32:39, 40, etc.

VI. Often do the Scriptures compare the needful change of heart to circumcision. "Circumcise your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. 10:16. One of the promises is: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live." Deut. 30:6. Compare Jer. 4:4. Now the use of circumcision was chiefly to teach us the spiritual truth that we must be changed in heart: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2:28, 29; compare 1 Cor. 7:19; Phil. 3:3.

VII. Sometimes the needful change of heart is in Scripture spoken of as a transformation. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2. The word rendered transformed is in 2 Cor. 3:18 rendered changed—"changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." In Matt. 17:2, Mark 9:2, it is rendered transfigured. It expresses a thorough change. One of the Lexicons quotes a remarkable sentence from Seneca: "I see that I must not only be amended, but transfigured." The whole man must be changed.

VIII. Sometimes the great change is spoken of as a renewal. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind;" you "have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10. Elsewhere Paul speaks expressly of "the renewing of the Holy Spirit," Tit. 3:5. Everyone knows what it is to

renovate, to take away all that is defective or wrong, and replace it with that which is sound and strong, thus making the thing as good as new.

IX. At least once the great change is spoken of as a translation. "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1:13. The verb used conveys the idea of removal from one country and settlement into another. Elijah was carried from earth, and thenceforward his home was in heaven. He was translated. Heb. 11:5. The verbs in the two cases are not the same in the Greek; but they both may be fairly rendered translated. In the great change issuing in salvation God thoroughly changes both man's state and man's heart, and brings him into the kingdom and under the government of the Son of his love. There is no change greater than this.

X. Again, this change of heart is styled a calling. All converted people are called to be saints. Romans 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 24. This calling is both holy and saving. 2 Tim. 1:9. It is heavenly. Heb. 3:1. It is from heaven. It is excellent. It is a call to heavenly bliss. It is unto God's eternal glory by Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 5:10. See also 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:7. This saving calling is effectual. It changes the heart and life just as it did those of Saul of Tarsus. When Christ calls and gives grace to obey the call, heaven is secure.

XI. Sometimes a change of heart is spoken of as a creation, or new creation. Thus David prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. It is essential to salvation, for "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or a new creation. Gal. 6:15. All real Christians are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and the new man is created in righteousness and holiness. Eph. 2:10; 4:24. This creation makes men new creatures indeed. It is marvelous to all; to none more than to him who is the subject of it.

XII. Sometimes the New Testament speaks of a change of heart as a passing from death unto life, or a resurrection from the dead. 1 John 3:14; Eph. 2:6. Jesus Christ used this form of speech in the boldest manner: "As the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom he will. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:21, 25.

XIII. Another name for a change of heart is the new birth, regeneration, or being born again. Our Lord declares it necessary to salvation, and says we should not wonder at his urging it. John 3:3-7. It is certain that men will never believe on the name of Jesus, if they are not born of God. John 1:12, 13; 1 John 5:1. The washing of regeneration is the sure method adopted by the mercy of God to save us. Titus 3:5. In this great change much honor is put upon the word of God as the instrument. 1 Pet. 1:23. Whoever is truly born of God has learned to despise the wealth, the honors, and the pleasures of the world as a portion. Such a one hates sin and loves holiness. 1 John 5:18. He longs after conformity to God. He never makes a trade of sin. "Everyone born of God overcomes the world." 1 John 5:4

XIV. All these modes of representing a change of heart show:

1. That it is a great change—a change so great that every fit form of speech is used to magnify it. It is a change celebrated in heaven itself. Luke 15:7. It is the setting up of God's kingdom in a human soul, that shall live and exult forever. Passing from earth to heaven is not a greater change in one's state, than is a passing from death to life in one's heart and character.

2. A saving change of heart is internal. It is in the inmost soul. It is a writing of the law on the heart. It is not any outward reformation, nor submission to baptism. Simon Magus was baptized, but he was in the bond of iniquity and in the gall of bitterness still. Acts 8:23.

3. It is not a partial change, but it is thorough and universal: "Old things are passed away behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. It changes men's aims, and hopes, and fears, and views, and lives.

4. It is a change above nature. It is by the Holy Spirit, by the power of God, even "the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Eph. 1:19.

5. It is a vital and essential change. Without it there is no salvation. Men may be saved without money, without friends, without honor, but not without the new birth. John 3:3, 5.

JUSTIFICATION

I. However much men are divided on the doctrine of justification, they generally seem united in their views of its importance. The Scriptures say much on the subject. It is the leading doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans, and of the Epistle to the Galatians. It is brought forward in the book of Genesis, in the Psalms, and in the last chapter of the Bible.

II. All men are just or unjust. All are saints or sinners; all are godly or ungodly; all are the children of God or the children of the wicked one; all are justified or condemned. All are now in favor with God, or they are out of his favor.

III. I have never seen a better definition than this: "Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardons all their sin, accepts and accounts their persons righteous in his sight; not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone." This is true and clear.

IV. No man is by nature justified. We are all by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Eph. 2:3. "There is none righteous, no not

one." Romans 3:10. The law speaks as it does, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Romans 3:19. So sad is our case, that "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6. Such is the uniform testimony of God's word.

V. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. Throughout the Scriptures these are spoken of as opposite states. Deut. 25:1; Job 9:20; Proverbs 17:15; Matt. 12:37; Romans 5:18. Whatever condemnation is, justification is the opposite; and every man is in one or other of these states.

VI. As no man is justified by nature, so no man is justified by his own works. If any shall do all that is commanded them, they are still bound to say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." Luke 17:10. No man can do more than his duty, and so the exact performance of present duty cannot cover past sins. The Scripture is clear: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." "No man is justified by the law in the sight of God." Romans 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 3:11. Angels never sinned. They are justified by law. Until man sinned he was justified by law. This way does not now suit us: "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3:10.

VII. God alone justifies. None else can do it. None has power to do it. It is one of God's highest rights. It is his peculiar privilege. He is the Justifier. Romans 3:26. It is God who justifies. Romans 8:33. God is Judge of all the earth. When he condemns, men are lost. When he justifies, none can condemn.

VIII. Man's justification is all of grace, undeserved kindness, unmerited mercy. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:6. "God commends his love

toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Romans 5:10. Paul says expressly that God "justifies the ungodly." Romans 4:5. That is, in justifying a sinner, the Lord looks on him as in himself lost, guilty, undone. No other scheme would suit us sinners, or be to us good news.

IX. An essential part of justification is the pardon of sin—all sin, original, actual, sin of omission, sin of commission, open sin, secret sin. Pardon and forgiveness are the same thing. By Jesus Christ "all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:39. In God's Word much is said of the pardon of sin, such as casting it into the sea, casting it behind the back, blotting it out, burying it, washing it away, forgetting it, covering it, not imputing it, taking it away, etc. When pardon comes at all it is complete: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1. The grace shown in the pardon of men's sins is without a parallel.

X. Those who are pardoned are also accepted in the Beloved. Eph. 1:6. These two things are never separated, though we distinguish between them. The great prophet who foretold the finishing of transgression, making an end of sins, and making reconciliation for iniquity, also speaks of bringing in everlasting righteousness. Dan. 9:24. It was a chief desire of Paul that he might "win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." Phil. 3:8, 9. One of the prophetic names of Christ was, "The Lord Our Righteousness." Jer. 23:6. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19. Christ is "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30. God "has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

XI. Thus the justification of the believing sinner is complete. Very many times remission is said to be by his blood. Zech. 9:11; Matt.

26:28; Romans 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Heb, 9:12, 14, 22; 10:9, 20. Very often we are said to be accepted by the righteousness, the obedience of another. These two things are often happily united in Scripture. Paul says, "Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans 4:6-8. This justification is complete and irrevocable, and is followed by salvation. Romans 8:32-39. Christ's righteousness is imputed, counted, reckoned to his people for their justification before God. Romans 3:21, 22; 4:3-6, 8-11.

XII. We are made partakers of salvation, and are justified by the righteousness of Christ through faith; even "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all those who believe." Romans 3:22. Compare Romans 4:14, 16, 18, 24; 5:1.

XIII. The greatness of God's mercy in the justification of sinners is beyond all man's powers of estimation. It will be a theme of thanksgiving in the ages of eternity. It is celebrated in heaven itself. Rev. 5:9-14.

XIV. The wisest thing any sinner can do is to accept from the heart God's Son, and God's way of saving man. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes." Romans 10:4. And "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11. Oh that all would believe!

XV. If these things are so, some may ask, "What, then, was the purpose of the law" Gal. 3:19. The answers are clear:

1. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20.
2. Justified men need a rule to direct their steps.
3. The law is in many cases useful in restraining men's corruptions.

4. Right views of the law show us our ill desert, and so lead us to behave meekly and humbly under afflictions.

5. God has so arranged the plan of salvation that a loving obedience to the precepts of the law meets with divine acceptance and a gracious reward. "We know that the law is good, if a man uses it lawfully." 1 Tim. 1:8.

SANCTIFICATION

I. Justification and sanctification are often joined in Scripture, and always united in fact. The proofs are ample. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1, 2. Compare Romans 8:1; 2; Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:7; Titus 2:14, and especially Phil. 3:8-12. He who hopes for sanctification without justification, and he who hopes for the latter without the former, are trying to put asunder what God has joined together. Both are sadly deceived.

II. Sanctification widely differs from justification. In justification sin is pardoned; in sanctification sin is subdued. In justification grace secures acceptance; in sanctification grace gives strength to resist temptation, and have victory over the world. In justification we are freed from wrath, and are regarded and treated as righteous; in sanctification we are freed from the reigning power of sin. Justification is an act; sanctification is a work. Justification is an act done in heaven; sanctification is a work done in us. Justification gives a title to eternal happiness; sanctification gives us fitness for the joys and services of heaven. Justification changes our state; sanctification changes our character. Justification is perfect at once in all cases; sanctification ordinarily is imperfect at first—a little leaven cast into three measures of meal. Sanctification proves justification; but justification cannot prove sanctification.

III. Sanctification differs from regeneration as the ripe or ripening corn differs from the tender blade at first put forth; as the fruit-bearing tree differs from the little scion; as the strong man differs from the new-born babe. Regeneration is the beginning of sanctification; sanctification is the completion of regeneration. In regeneration the seed is sown; in sanctification the harvest comes on. Young converts, except those who have a real change of heart, seem often to differ but little from men of the world. 1 Cor. 3:1-3.

IV. Very kindly has God promised that his people shall grow and advance in holiness: "Unto those who fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Mal. 4:2. Ample provision is made to this end by the bestowment of the Holy Spirit: "The Lord who made you and helps you says: O Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid. O Israel, my chosen one, do not fear. For I will give you abundant water to quench your thirst and to moisten your parched fields. And I will pour out my Spirit and my blessings on your children. They will thrive like watered grass, like willows on a riverbank." Isaiah 44:2-4.

V. It is a duty to advance in holiness: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication: that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." 1 Thess. 4:3, 4. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3:18. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14.

VI. Like creation and providence, sanctification is a work of the Godhead: "I am the Lord who sanctify you." "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Lev. 20:8; Jer. 32:40. In Jude 1, believers are said to be "sanctified by God the Father." In 1 Cor, 1:30, it is said "Christ Jesus is made unto us sanctification." Compare Eph. 5:26, 27. In 2 Thess. 2:13, Paul says, God "has from the beginning chosen you

to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." Compare Eph. 1:4; Matt. 3:11.

VII. In this work God's children concur: "We are laborers together with God." "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 7:1. This concurrence of God's people consists mainly in these things:

1. They consent to the law that it is good.
2. They greatly desire increase of holiness.
3. They pray and labor for it.
4. They deeply mourn and humble themselves when they have it not.

VIII. This sanctification is in the whole nature. Inspired writers use all the words necessary to teach this doctrine. Paul says: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23. Compare Ezek. 36:25-27; Eph. 4:22-32.

IX. The great means of promoting the sanctification of believers is the gospel, sometimes called the grace of God, because it is a great fruit of his undeserved kindness, as in Titus 2:11, 12: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Compare Eph. 5:26; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 12:10.

X. The sanctification of believers is in this life imperfect. The best of men are men at the best. "There is no man that sins not." "There is not a just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not." 1 Kings 8:46; Eccles. 7:20. Compare 1 Cor. 9:27; 13:9, 10. So that "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are

contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." Gal. 5:17.

XI. Because of these things we naturally expect a warfare in the Christian life. Christian experience fulfils this expectation. In Romans 7:14-25, the apostle Paul gives us the details of such a conflict in his own case. Some indeed have said that he did not refer to himself at all. But more than twenty times he says he did mean himself, using the words I, mine, me. Some say that he refers to himself in an unconverted state. But he says he refers to himself at the time of writing. All the verbs are in the present tense, as am, do, allow, find, etc. Besides, no unconverted man ever "consents unto the law that it is good," nor "delights in the law of God after the inward man." Clearly the passage refers to Paul after his conversion.

XII. Growth in grace is properly evidenced by increase of good works. "Every good tree brings forth good fruit." "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Matt. 7:17; Eph. 2:10. Compare Phil. 4:8.

XIII. There is one class of evidences of growth in holiness much insisted on in the Scriptures. It consists of what are commonly called the passive virtues, such as meekness, humility, gentleness, forbearance, forgiveness, self-denial, etc. The greater attainments Paul made, the humbler he was. Some time after his conversion he speaks of himself as "unworthy to be called an apostle." Still later he says he was "less than the least of all saints." He enters heaven with the cry, "I am the chief of sinners."

XIV. The longer men live, and the more they live to the honor of their Master, the brighter shall be their crown in heaven. "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Dan. 12:3. Compare Isaiah 43:21; Matt. 5:12; Col. 3:24; 1 Cor. 15:41.

XV. Therefore let every man live wholly unto God. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown."
Rev. 3:11

PRAYER

I. Atheism never worships. In practice modern deism is atheistic. But there is no form of religion without prayer, and surely there is no salvation to those who restrain prayer. Our needs as creatures, and our necessities as sinners, can be supplied by Him who is infinite. Prayer is a duty taught by natural religion.

II. In Scripture prayer is mentioned about five hundred times. It is spoken of in the first book of the Bible, Gen. 4:26; and in the last chapter of the sacred volume, Rev. 22:20. To speak of a prayerless Christian is as absurd as to talk of a living man who never breathes. As soon as Saul of Tarsus met with a change of heart, it was said, "Behold, he prays." Acts 9:11.

III. Quite a variety of words and phrases are used in Scripture to express the act of praying, such as bowing down to God, serving him, calling upon his name, seeking him, entreating him, beseeching him, inquiring of him, and, in one case, commanding him. In a single verse Paul speaks of supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. 1 Tim. 2:1.

IV. By nature we are poor creatures. We are not sufficient as of ourselves to think anything good, or right, or holy. 2 Cor. 3:5. Nor can we of ourselves ever offer a right prayer: "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will." Romans 8:26, 27. So that all prayer truly pleasing to God, is indited by the Holy Spirit,

who is freely given by God to all who sincerely ask for so great a blessing. Luke 11:13.

V. According to Scripture there is no one posture, and no particular set of gestures, attitudes, or intonations, requisite to acceptance in praying. David sat and prayed. 1 Chron. 17:16. Compare Exod. 17:12. The publican stood and prayed. Luke 18:13. Daniel kneeled and prayed. Dan. 6:10. Jonah lay in the whale's belly and prayed. Jonah 2:1. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall as he lay in his bed, and prayed. Isaiah 38:2. Our Lord prostrated himself with his face to the ground, and prayed. Matt. 26:39. Very often the ancients prayed with their hands and eyes directed to heaven. So Moses lifted his hands until from weariness he could hold them up no more, until Aaron and Hur stood and held them up. Exod. 17:11, 12. Compare Psalm 141:2. But the publican lifted not up even his eyes to heaven, yet he was accepted. Our whole behavior should suit the occasion, and should express reverence, trust, and humility.

VI. Nor does the power of prayer depend upon the words used. The Pharisee used many words and was rejected. The publican used few words and was justified. Luke 18:10-14. Hannah murmured or whispered her good prayer. 1 Sam. 1:13-17. When prayer is social or public, it should be in words understood by all who unite in the service. 1 Cor. 14:14-17.

VII. Neither is the place nor the direction of the face towards any place of the least importance. The temple was once a very fit place of prayer. Isaiah 56:7. Compare 1 Kings 8:29, 30; Dan. 6:10. But prophecy required that all this should pass away: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, says the Lord Almighty." Mal. 1:11. Accordingly, when Christ came, he said to the woman of Samaria: "Believe me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." John 4:21. The

Lord looks on the heart, not on the place where we are, when we call upon his name.

VIII. For whom shall we pray? Not for the dead. 2 Sam. 12:15-23; Luke 16:25, 26; Rev. 14:13. Again, living men may treat with such scorn and blasphemy sacred things, and especially the person and work of the Holy Spirit, that though they may be living and known to us, we shall not feel obliged or able to pray for such despisers. Compare 1 John 5:16; Mark 3:29. With these exceptions we are to pray for all men: for kings and rulers, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; for enemies, Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35; for unkind friends, who have wronged us, Job 42:10; for the sick, Jas. 5:14-16; for the church, Psalm 122:6; for the afflicted, Psalm 50:15; Jas. 5:13; for men's souls and bodies, 3 John 2; for preachers of the gospel, 1 Thess. 5:25; for the wicked that they perish not, Jer. 31:7; in short, for all sorts of men. 1 Tim. 2:1. Bad men are in perishing need of help and mercy. Godly men are in the midst of trials and enemies, and require help from God. We should pray for ourselves. Psalm 90:17.

IX. We should pray often. Jesus spoke two parables to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Luke 11:5-9; 18:1-8. The Scriptures call on us to "continue instant in prayer." Romans 12:12; to "pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," Eph. 6:18; yes, to "pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. 5:17.

X. It is required in all worship, in prayer particularly, that it be intelligent. It is sad when it may be truly charged upon us, "You worship you know not what." John 4:22. In malice it is desirable that all be children, but in understanding let all be men. 1 Cor. 14:20. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." 1 Cor. 14:15.

XI. It is very important that all our worship should be offered in innocence and benevolence. It is shocking for men to come around the throne of grace with malice in their hearts and with stains upon

their hands. That was a good resolution of David: "I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass your altar, O Lord!" Psalm 26:6. And Paul says, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 1 Tim. 2:8. And Peter exhorts us to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." 1 Pet. 2:1. Compare Matt. 5:23, 24; 6:14, 15.

XII. All prayer that God is bound to answer must be offered in faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6; Jas. 1:6, 7.

XIII. All acceptable prayer must be fervent and earnest. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Jas. 5:16-18.

XIV. In all prayer we must submit to the ultimate will of God. In this our divine Lord set us an example, which we should never forget. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will." "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, your will be done." Matt. 26:39, 42.

XV. With prayer the Scriptures often unite alms-giving. To Cornelius the Lord said in a vision, "Your prayers and your alms are come up for a memorial before God." Acts 10:4. It was Jesus who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35. He also said, "Sell that you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts." Luke 12:33.

XVI. To prayer it is often proper to unite fasting. David says: "I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer was genuine." Psalm 35:13. Daniel followed this example. Dan. 9:3. Compare 1 Cor. 7:5.

XVII. Both Christ and his apostles unite watching and prayer. In vain do we pray unless we watch. "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation." Matt. 26:41; compare Mark 13:33; 14:38; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2.

XVIII. Such prayer as the Scriptures require is wondrously efficacious. Psalm 50:15; Matt. 7:7, 8. There is no mightier influence exerted by creatures than that found in prayer. The history of human salvation is a history of the power of prayer. It is God's memorial in every generation--that he hears prayer.

GOD'S LAW

I. God is a Father, and teaches us to call him so. Mal. 1:6; Matt. 6:9. But he is also a Judge, Gen. 18:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; a Ruler, Mic. 5:2; Zech. 6:13; a Governor, Psalm 22; 28; Matt. 2:6; a King, Psalm 5:2; 10:16; a Lawgiver, Jas. 4:12; Deut. 6:24. One of the highest prerogatives of government is the power of making laws.

II. If God makes laws for his rational creatures, they are bound to study them, and learn what they mean. This is implied in nearly every verse of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm Compare Deut. 6:6-9. No duty can be clearer. Men are as surely bound to obey them. Deut. 13:4; Jer. 26:13; 42:6; Acts 5:29; Heb. 5:9.

III. The law of God, as given from Mount Sinai, was in ten precepts, and is hence called the Decalogue, or the ten words, as the Hebrew expresses it. These ten precepts are statutes, ordinances, commandments. They claim and possess the highest authority. They are not given as advice, but as laws—laws of binding force. The same ten precepts were repeated just before Israel entered Canaan.

IV. The law of God is by our Savior given in a briefer form. When one asked him, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered him: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22:36-40. Compare Mark 12:28-31.

V. The apostle Paul gives even yet a more brief summary of the law of God: "All the law is fulfilled in one word, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Gal. 5:14. Again: "Love works no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10. While it is true that love is the essential element demanded by both tables of the law, it is right to say that the subject on which Paul is speaking in both of the places cited, is our duty to our neighbor.

VI. A careful examination and comparison of Exod. 23:20, 21; Acts 7:30-38; and Heb. 12:25, 26, will show that in a very important sense the Son of God was the author of the moral law, was present when it was given, and has expressed displeasure when it was broken. Christ is dishonored when men keep not the law.

VII. The law has its binding force from the glorious character of the Lawgiver, and from his relations to his creatures. He is glorious in holiness. He is wonderful in working. He is Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. The law also binds from its own excellence. It is spiritual, Romans 7:14; it is perfect, Psalm 19:8; it is holy, just, and good, Romans 7:12; it is unchangeable, Deut. 4:2; Isaiah 5:20; 2 Tim. 3:16. It is of course eternal. It is so declared to be by Jesus Christ. Matt. 5:17-19. One great object of the sermon on the mount was to rescue this law from false glosses.

VIII. This law was not only spoken by the mouth of God, but it was twice written by his finger. Deut. 4:33; 5:4, 22; Exod. 32:15, 16; 34:1; Deut. 10:4, 5.

IX. This law was at first on two tables of stone; and it is yet fitly spoken of as in two tables. The first of these consists of the first four

precepts, directly relating to our duty to God. The second consists of six precepts, defining our duty to man.

X. The first commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me." This clearly requires us to know God, 1 Chron. 28:9; and to confess him, Deut. 26:17; to own him and to honor him, Psalm 95:6, 7; to meditate upon his character, Psalm 63:6; to choose him, Josh. 24:22; to love and fear him, Deut. 6:5; to trust, Exod. 14:31, Isaiah 26:4; hope, Psalm 130:7, and delight in him, Psalm 37:4; to worship him in the way he appoints, Phil. 4:6; to study to please him, 1 Thess. 4:1; to be humble before him, and sorry when we offend him, Mic. 6:8; Jer. 31:18. It also forbids us to think, live, or act like atheists, Jer. 2:27, 28; Psalm 81:11; to withhold from him anything that is his due, Isaiah 43:22, 23; to be ignorant or forgetful of him, Jer. 4:22; to have base or vile thoughts concerning him, Acts 17:23, 29; to hate him, Romans 1:30; to distrust him, Heb. 3:12; to be vain or proud in his presence, Romans 1:30; to tempt him, Matt. 4:7; to restrain prayer before him, Job 15:4; or to trust in ourselves or in any creature for effectual help or succor, Jer. 2:13.

XI. The second commandment is, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them." This law clearly requires that we should observe and keep pure all God's worship, Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20; we should pray and give thanks in the name of Christ, John 14:13; we should read, study, hear, and obey God's word, John 5:39; Jas. 1:21, 22; observe the ordinances of his house, Matt. 28:19; vow, and pay our vows, Psalm 66:13; and oppose all false worship, Micah 6:16; 1 Kings 12:33. It forbids worship not commanded by God, Deut. 4:15-19; Acts 17:29; the making or using any image or likeness to represent God, or to aid in worship, Romans 1:21-25. It forbids all superstition, all sacrilege, all contempt and hindering of God's worship, Acts 17:22; Col. 2:21-23. There is an awful reason given for keeping this command: "for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who

hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

XII. The third commandment is: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain." This commandment requires us in thought, speech, and act, holily and reverently to use God's names, Matt. 6:9, titles, Psalm 68:4, attributes, Deut. 28:58, ordinances, Eccles. 5:1, word, Psalm 19:7, works and worship, Psalm 138:2, such as prayer, praise, vows, oaths, and lots, 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 1:27. It requires us to do all to the glory of God. 1Pet. 2:12. And it forbids us to indulge in vain, profane, or superstitious use of anything pertaining to God. Acts 17:23; Jer. 7:4. It forbids blasphemy, Exod. 5:2, perjury, Zech. 5:4, profane oaths, Matt. 5:34-37, rash or wicked vows, Acts 23:12, 14, bitter cursings, Romans 12:14, murmurings against God, Romans 9:14-20, jesting with sacred things, Eph. 5:4, idle questions, 1 Tim. 6:4, 5, the use of charms, Deut. 18:10-14, hating of holy things, 2 Tim. 3:5, hypocrisy, Matt. 23:14, or in any way diminishing the fear of God in ourselves or others, Mark 8:38. The reason given is, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain."

XIII. The fourth commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." Exodus 20:8-11. This precept requires us to keep holy all the time God has set apart for his service, expressly one whole day in seven. Gen. 2:3; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. We are then to rest from all such works and employments as are on other days lawful, Exod. 16:25-29; Jer. 17:21, 22; and spend those sacred hours in such thoughts, reading, hearing, praying, praising, and conversation, as are suited to glorify God. Isaiah 58:13, 14. It is a great sin to be weary of the Sabbath-day, or to

be idle on that day, or to engage in needless works, words, and thoughts about worldly matters. Luke 23:54-56. This command is most reasonable. Exod. 23:12. God gives us six days; he claims but the seventh part of our time. He has set us an example in resting the seventh day from all his works. This commandment is very solemnly enacted, beginning with the word "Remember." According to his promise, he greatly blesses those who keep holy the Sabbath. Isaiah 56:2-7. According to his threatening, he sorely chastises those who profane that sacred day. Jer. 17:27.

GOD'S LAW—SECOND TABLE

I. We have already considered the first table of the law, which states our duty to God. We come now to consider the second table of the law, which regards our duty to man. The sum of it is, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." We as much need grace rightly to keep the second table as the first.

II. The fifth commandment is, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." In the spirit of this law, a father and a mother point not only to our parents according to the flesh, but to all who have authority over us, or are our superiors. We ought in heart, speech and act to honor and reverence our superiors, Proverbs 16:31; pray for them, 1 Tim. 2:1-3; cheerfully obey their lawful commands and good counsels, Eph. 6:1-7; be true and faithful to them, defend them, Tit. 2:9, 10; Romans 13:6, 7; love them, and, as far as possible, hide their faults, Gen. 9:23. This command forbids us to envy our superiors, Numb. 11:28, 29; to despise them, Isaiah 3:5; to rebel against just authority, Exod. 21:15; to curse or mock them, Deut. 21:18-21; or try to put them to shame, Proverbs 19:26. All this implies that parents and other superiors should love and pray for those under them, Eph. 6:4; should instruct and counsel them, Deut. 6:6, 7; defend them, Romans 13:3; commend them, Esth. 6:3; and, when necessary, chastise them, Proverbs 29:15 but never to be bitter

against them, Eph. 6:4. This precept also shows the sin of envying the gifts or grieving at the prosperity of our equals. The promise added to this commandment is, "That your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." Compare Deut. 5:16; 1 Kings 8:25; Eph. 6:2, 3. It is a lovely sight to see a whole family or society ruled by the law of love.

III. The sixth commandment is, "You shall not kill." This requires a careful study and a lawful endeavor to preserve human life. 1 Sam. 19:4, 5. It therefore requires us to subdue all malignant passions, Psalm 37:8, 11; Proverbs 22:24, 26; Eph. 4:26; and to be very careful in the use of food, drink, medicine, rest, and recreation, so as not to shorten life. Proverbs 17:22; 23:20, 29, 30. It requires us to banish hatred, 1 John 3:15; 4:20, malice, envy, 1 Peter 2:1, unjust jealousy, Cant. 8:6, needless disquietude, unholy anger, Jas. 4:1; Proverbs 27:4; and to cherish love, pity, and kindness in our hearts, words and acts, 1 Cor. 13:4-7; to forgive injuries, Matt. 6:14; 15; Romans 12:19, 20; and to help and defend the innocent, Proverbs 24:11; 31:8, 9; Matt. 25:35, 36. It forbids the needless, careless, unjust or cruel wasting of human life, irritating words, Proverbs 12:18; 15:1; injustice, Exod. 22:2, quarrelling, striking, Isaiah 3:15, wounding or insulting men, Proverbs 28:17, so as to distress their spirits, or to tempt them to deeds of violence.

IV. The seventh commandment is, "You shall not commit adultery." This requires purity in the mind, in the heart, in words, looks, and acts. It requires us to be chaste in body, 1 Thess. 4:4, 5; to avoid unchaste sights and unchaste company. Job 31:1; Proverbs 5:3-10. It says nothing against lawful wedlock. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." Heb. 13:4. Our Savior was present at a marriage. It forbids adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, all unclean thoughts and affections, all wantonness in looks, dress, or behavior. 1 Cor. 7:2; Tit. 2:4, 5; Matt. 5:28; Jer. 5:7; 1 Cor. 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:9. It allows no man to have more than one wife, and no woman to have more than one husband. We should avoid everything that begets in us or in others any lack of purity or temperance. Eph. 5:3,

4. Husbands ought to love their wives very tenderly, and very strongly, even as Christ loved the church. Eph. 5:29, 33. And wives should reverence their husbands and love them. Eph. 5:33; Titus 2:4, 5.

V. The eighth commandment is, "You shall not steal." This clearly requires truth, justice, fairness, honor, and fidelity in trades and bargains between man and man. Psalm 15:2, 4. We should give to every man, and every body of men their dues. Romans 13:7. It requires contentment with our own lot. 1 Tim. 6:8. It enjoins kindness to the poor and needy. Deut. 15:7, 8, 10; 1 Tim. 6:17, 18. Everyone ought to have some proper business, and be industrious in it. Romans 12:11; Eph. 4:28. It is our duty to care for those dependent on us, particularly poor and aged relatives or neighbors. 1 Tim. 5:8. This precept forbids all stealing, all robbery, all cheating, false weights and measures, all oppression, extortion, usury, vexatious law-suits, covetousness, love of the world. 1 John 2:15, 16. It is wicked to waste our worldly goods, and it is wicked to hoard them up, or to receive stolen goods. Proverbs 29:24; Psalm 50:18; James 5:4; Eccl. 4:8.

VI. The ninth commandment is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." A neighbor is any one to whom we can do good or harm, whether he lives near us or not. Luke 10:30-37. This commandment requires us to think, feel, speak and act truly, Psalm 15:2, and sincerely, 2 Chron. 19:9, towards all our fellow-men. We should love and rejoice in their good name, 3 John 4, in their gifts and graces, Romans 1:8. We should defend the innocent. Psalm 82:3. We should take sides with the slandered. Psalm 15:3; Proverbs 25:23. We should keep our word and study and practice all things that are true, honest, lovely, and of good report. Phil. 4:8.

The sins against this commandment are many and heinous: such as telling lies, giving false evidence, Luke 3:14; Proverbs 19:5; asking other people to do so, calling evil good, and good evil, Isaiah 5:20; forgery, back-biting, Psalm 15:3; Romans 1:30; detracting, tale-

bearing, whispering, Romans 1:29; scoffing, Proverbs 21:9; railing, 1 Tim. 6:4; reviling, 1 Cor. 6:10; flattering, Proverbs 20:19; boasting, Proverbs 20:14; or encouraging others to do these things. We must not take sides with the rich or poor when we pass judgment. We must not "respect persons." We must not be glad when men do wrong or when they suffer wrong. Read James 2:1-18.

VII. The tenth commandment is, "Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else your neighbor owns." Surely this requires contentment with our own lot, Heb. 13:5, and pleasure at the good success of our neighbor, Romans 12:15. Surely it forbids all discontent, all envy, James 3:14, 16, all ill-will towards others, as well as all vain-glory, Gal. 5:26, and all the pride of life, Proverbs 8:13; 11:2.

VIII. We should keep all these precepts. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all your commandments." Psalm 119:6; Compare 1 Cor. 7:19. In no other way can we prove our love to Christ. John 14:23. Nor is there any substitute for an honest, simple, earnest keeping of the law of God. Deut. 10:12, 13; 28:58, 59 Micah 6:6-8.

IX. The motives urged upon us for keeping God's commandments are, 1, it is our duty; 2, his commands are not grievous; 3, we are under obligations of gratitude; 4, God is worthy of all honor, and the highest honor we can give him is to obey him and imitate him.

X. A right study of the law shows us that we are all sinners. "There is no man who does not sin;" "There is not a just man upon earth that does good and sins not;" "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 Kings 8:46; Eccl. 7:20; Proverbs 20:9; 1 John 1:8.

XI. It is a glorious truth that for the purposes of righteousness—complete justification—we are delivered from the law. Romans 7:6. We are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:14. The way of access to heaven by personal deservings is forever closed against sinners. But thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift, Jesus Christ. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23.

A PROFESSION OF RELIGION

I. The same word in the Greek Testament is translated both Confession and Profession. Both these words mean an avowal, an open declaration. To confess Christ is to avow friendship for him when it is considered dangerous to do so. To profess Christ is to avow the truth of his gospel and yield obedience to his precepts, whether men are pleased or displeased. Timothy "professed a good profession before many witnesses." "Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." 1 Tim. 6:12, 13. In the Greek we have the same word in both verses.

II. A profession of religion may be made in words. Thus the Ethiopian said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:37. Or it may be made by deeds, as when Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus, and took it, and laid it in a new sepulcher. John 19:38-42. So Onesiphorus by noble acts professed his belief in Christianity, when he was not ashamed of Paul's chain, but diligently sought him, found him, and ministered to him. 2 Tim. 1:16-18.

Paul tells us of some, who "profess that they know God: but in works they deny him." The best profession is when both by words and deeds we own our Master and show our love to his cause. "All real Christians are professors, but all professors are not real Christians." Custom, conscience, education, vanity, novelty, lead many to a heartless profession. Study the case of Saul, Jehu, Herod, the stony-ground hearers, and the foolish virgins.

III. A good profession is:

1. Intelligent. A man must know what he affirms, and have a reason of the hope that is in him.
2. It must be sincere. Hypocrisy spoils everything. An insincere profession of love is very odious to any right-minded man. It must be infinitely odious to God.
3. It must be humble, not proud, not like those who, professing themselves wise, become fools.
4. It must be stable, not like that of some, who went back and walked no more with Him. John 6:66. "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Rev. 2:10. Nor is this all.
5. A good profession must be made from love to Christ and his cause. It must flow from gratitude.
6. It must contain an unreserved surrender of soul and body, time and talents, to God. We must keep back no part of the price. We must give him all.
7. Such a profession is necessary; for "with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:10.

IV. That it is a binding duty to profess Christ, and avow our love to him and his cause, is certain.

1. No man lights a candle, and puts it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine. Matt. 5:15, 16.
2. If we have found out a blessed secret, "the secret of the Lord," we ought to let others know what God has done for our souls. Psalm 66:16. The four leprous men, who found such abundance in the

Syrian camp, rightly judged that they ought not to keep silence, when their brethren were perishing so near them. They were afraid some mischief would come upon them, and they were right. 2 Kings 7:9. Moreover,

3. Christ loved us openly, and why should we attempt to put him off with secret love? He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting. Isaiah 50:6. Why should we study to avoid persecution by declining shame and reproach for Christ?

4. If all men should decline to profess love to Christ, he would soon have no known friends upon earth, and his church would become extinct. In the days of Elijah there were a hundred prophets, but they were hid away in a cave, and could do nothing publicly for God. And there were seven thousand men which had not bowed the knee to Baal; but, poor things, they were driven into silence. The power of their example was lost, except on a few who secretly knew their worth.

5. Then we have the command of God: "Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. We are bound to hold forth the word of life, Phil. 2:16, and to hold fast our profession. Heb. 4:14.

V. The reasons why men do not profess love to Christ, and so espouse his cause, are such as these:

1. Some have no love to him; and they know that a profession of attachment to his cause would be sheer hypocrisy. And so it would. They have candor enough to say so, but they have not conscience enough to quit their sins and turn to God, and then make a true profession of love to him.

2. Some are restrained because they wish to indulge themselves in some course of conduct not consistent with a good profession. Herod was greatly affected with John's preaching, but there was one sin he would not give up.

3. Others do not profess love to Christ because in their case it would make them unpopular, or bring upon them some reproach; and they have no courage at all.

4. Yet others do not avow love to Christ because a profession of his name involves a confession of his divinity; and they claim to have doubts on that subject. But why should they doubt? "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." "Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God." 1 John 2:22; 4:2, 3, 15. "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." 2 John 7. It is only ungodly men who deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4.

5. Some men, who have a work of grace begun in their hearts, have yet too weak faith to come out openly on the Lord's side. But where the heart is substantially right, there will surely be an increase of courage and an open avowal of love for Christ. See John 19:38-42. Those cases of Joseph and Nicodemus are very different from those mentioned in John 12:42, 43. The latter did not truly love the Lord. They were also very different from that man and woman mentioned in John 9:22. These were mere evasive triflers. But we must profess our love to Christ, however perilous it may seem to be. Christ commended the church in Philadelphia, which with its little strength still kept his word. Rev. 3:8.

VI. Well may saints be steadfast and intrepid in adhering to Christ Jesus because he is the High Priest of our profession. Heb. 3:1. "Let

us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." Heb. 10:23. We do not need, and we cannot have better support or encouragement than is thus given us through Jesus Christ.

VII. Let us also think of the exceedingly glorious reward laid up for those who sincerely and steadily avow their love to Christ's person and cause. It is expressed in such terms as these: "Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8. "He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Rev. 3:5. Compare Heb. 2:11; 11:16.

VIII. But oh, the dreadful doom of those who are ashamed of Christ: "Whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:33; compare Mark 8:38; Luke 12:9. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us." 2 Tim. 2:12. Could words of greater terror be spoken! To be denied by Christ at the last interview with him and his saints, and to be cast out forever from the light of life--oh, horror of horrors!

HOW SAINTS ARE KEPT

I. It cannot be denied that God's people have many enemies, and are surrounded with terrible dangers. There is the world, with its enchantments, riches, pleasures, and honors. Now "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:16. Then there is the flesh—the natural corruption that is in man. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." Gal. 5:17. Then there is the great adversary, the devil,

who, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Pet. 5:8.

II. No marvel, therefore, that self-deceivers, whose hearts have never been really changed, should often give up their profession. The Scriptures tell us of such people, and warn us to expect apostasies. The longest-lived apostle explains their case: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John 2:19. Divine truth made no impression at all on the "wayside" hearers. Satan "immediately took away the word that was sown in their hearts." The stony-ground hearers were different. A pleasant impression was made on them, but they "had no root in themselves, and so endured but for a time." Still another class was impressed, but the "cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word." Mark 4:15-19.

III. A godly man once said: "If through God's mercy I shall reach heaven, three things will greatly surprise me: 1. I shall find some there of whose salvation on earth I had no hope. 2. I shall meet many there of whose salvation on earth I had many fears. 3. The greatest wonder of all will be to find myself there." Every godly man regards himself as a miracle of grace. Even real saints are at first but babes in Christ. Matt. 11:25; 1 Peter 2:2. The best men on earth confess their own weakness. 2 Cor. 12:10. Their safety very much consists in knowing their own weakness. So that all of us might despair of coming off conquerors.

IV. Were it not for God's plan and gracious purpose so clearly revealed in the Scripture, all men might despair. But he has said: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you." Isaiah 54:10. "I have loved you with an everlasting love;" "I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their

hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer. 31:3; 32:40. "This is the Father's will who has sent me, that of all which he has given me I shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up again at the last day." John 6:39; compare John 17:2; Romans 8:29,30.

V. God has set his hand to this work, and he is of one mind, and who can turn him? Job 23:13. He never begins a work and gives it up because of difficulties. Paul was "confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6.

VI. The saints are kept because God is their keeper. "How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings." "The Lord loves judgment, and forsakes not his saints; they are preserved forever." Psalm 36:7; 37:28; compare John 17:11; Phil. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:5.

VII. Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." John 10:27-30. Christ and his Father are not divided in keeping the saints. When Paul was in great distress, did not Jesus say to him: "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"? Did not our Lord purchase his people at a great price, and shall he fail? "You know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. But Christ has not only bought his people; he also intercedes for them, and him the Father hears always. John 11:42. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." Luke 22:31,32. No wonder Peter was brought to repentance under the power of such prayer. Compare John 17:1-24. Jesus "is able to save completely those who come to

God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." Heb. 7:25.

VIII. God's word teaches that the Holy Spirit does keep and sustain Christ's people. He abides with them forever. John 14:17. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Romans 8:16. Surely the Holy Spirit will not allow his witness to be falsified. All the saints are strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. Eph. 3:16. And so they are warned not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30.

IX. Some of the passages already cited prove that saints are kept by the might, the strength of Jehovah. Other Scriptures speak the same language. Of the weak brother, Paul says: "He shall be hold up: for God is able to make him stand." Romans 14:4. Of the good man, David says: "Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with his hand." Psalm 37:24. And Peter says, that saints "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1 Pet. 1:5; compare Eph. 3:16.

X. In the preservation of the saints the word of God has its use, and does its part. "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. "Your word is very pure." Psalm 119:140. "Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth." John 17:17.

XI. God also keeps his people by stirring up their hearts to "put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Eph. 6:11. He commands us to keep ourselves pure, 1 Tim. 5:22; and to "resist the devil," with the promise, "he will flee from you." James 4:7.

XII. In preserving his saints the Lord makes much use of the gospel ministry, and so he commands: "Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that

must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." Heb. 13:17.

XIII. To the same end he employs the afflictions of his people. "He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Heb. 12:10. Compare 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

XIV. It is by and through faith that God's people have their stability. "Whoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4, 5. Compare Psalm 125:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:5.

XV. The blessed conclusion to which all these Scripture truths lead us, is abounding triumph in God through Jesus Christ. Find and read Romans 8:35-39.

DEATH

I. We all must die. That is certain. The thing is fixed. "It is appointed unto men once to die." Heb. 9:27. None but fools deny this.

II. Death to men comes by sin. It is the fruit of transgression. A part of the sentence passed upon man for eating the forbidden fruit was, "Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return." Gen. 3:19. The same is taught by Paul; "Death entered by sin." "By one man's offence death reigned by one." "The wages of sin is death." Romans 5:12, 17; 6:23.

III. No wonder then that death among men is often so painful, either to undergo or to behold.

IV. Nor can anyone tell at what moment he must die, nor by what means he shall die. It may be with long and painful warning; or it may be without the least notice.

V. The corruption of the body which soon follows death is very distressing. Even the most loving friend wishes his dead buried out of his sight. Gen. 23:4. We cannot divest ourselves of interest in the changes which our bodies undergo. It makes us sad that they must become loathsome.

VI. We often spend time in thoughts upon the means used for removing men from the world. But God often strikes with death when we can see no means whatever. He has the keys of death and the grave. "You turn man to destruction." Psalm 90:3.

VII. Death forever ends the day of grace. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave where you go." Eccles. 9:10. To those who die in sin mercy is never again offered. If men persist in wickedness until they leave this world, they will never have another call to light and life.

VIII. Godly men do not really die as the wicked. To them death has no sting. 1 Cor. 15:56. The good man is taken away from the evil to come. Isaiah 57:1. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Psalm 37:37; Rev. 14:13.

IX. Seeing God is not angry with his people, why does he allow his children to die? He did not allow Enoch and Elijah to die: but every other good man has died or shall die. We may not know all the reasons why God allows his people to taste of death. But if all wicked men died, and all the righteous were taken to heaven without seeing death, there would be a great deal of distress in this world; for it would be known in this life who was saved and who was lost. Besides, it is very right that, as their Lord entered the grave and rose again, so his people should die also. Their death is blessed. They sleep in Jesus. 1 Thess. 4:14. It is enough that the disciple be as his Lord.

X. Death is not an everlasting sleep. The soul cannot sleep. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Matt. 22:32. When Lazarus

died he was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. God has promised eternal life—a conscious, happy existence—to all who love his Son and keep his commandments. At death the spirits of just men are made perfect. Heb. 2:23. All Christ's people shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2. Nor are the wicked without sense or thought after death. The rich man awaked in hell, being in torments. Luke 16:23. At death the wicked pass into the pit of woe. Their doom is awful. Read Isaiah 14:9-20.

XI. Many have expressed great wonder that the mass of men, even in Christian countries, think so little about dying. Even some of the heathen seem to have thought a great deal on the subject. Xerxes wept in reviewing his great army, when he remembered that in a hundred years not a man of them would be living. Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, required a servant to awake him every morning by crying at his chamber, "Philip, remember you are mortal. Philip, remember you are mortal. Philip, remember you are mortal." The more light one has respecting the immediate consequences of death on the soul, the less is he disposed to think of the matter at all, unless he is prepared or preparing to meet God.

XII. Mere familiarity with the subject of death makes no man wiser or better. It is well known that public executioners and soldiers, who often witness death in its worst forms, are but little affected by it.

XIII. There is also a strong and a strange delusion in many minds respecting one's own mortality. "All men think all men mortal but themselves."

Very firm health often strengthens this foolish impression. Some men have such an even tenor to their lives that they vainly think it shall always be so. God has spared them a long time, and they say he will never call them to an account. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccles. 8:11. It is a great weakness in men to think that because all is calm now, there will never be a

storm. They have good days now; but let them remember that the night comes when no man can work. John 9:4. It is not wisdom, it is fool-hardiness to cry, "Tomorrow shall be as this day, and more abundant."

XIV. The thoughts of men as to what constitutes full preparation for death are very various. Some seem to think a few words of mournful prayer, when one is about to breathe his last, will be ample preparation. Others rely on their almsgiving. Many others intend to repent and change their course of life. A few, who are taught from heaven, believe that the whole heart must be changed, and the whole nature renewed in this world. Dying will not convert an enemy of God into a friend of God. It is not the bitterness but the holy nature of our repentance that will prove it to be saving. Lost men and lost angels weep and howl for vexation of spirit; but they sin on.

XV. No one can be fit to die who does not hate every false way, who does not turn from all sin, and lay fast hold on the merits of the Redeemer. Out of Christ God is a consuming fire. There is mercy for the chief of sinners who believes in Jesus. But there is no salvation for the proud, the self-righteous, the covetous, the envious, the malignant, the thief, the liar, or even for the decently moral man, to whom Jesus Christ is as a root out of a dry ground, without form or loveliness. To all who renounce themselves, their works and worth and will, and accept salvation as it is freely offered in Jesus Christ, eternal life is certain.

XVI. One of the wonders in the plan of salvation is that by death Jesus Christ destroyed him that had the power of death. His death gave hope beyond death. It showed us the path of life—a life so blessed and so lasting, that it is one of the names given by inspired men to the immortal bliss which the Redeemed shall enjoy in the bosom of God forever.

XVII. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Cor. 15:26. He has tyrannized over the world for a long time, and his power will

be more or less felt until death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Thenceforth he shall have no power even to mar the bliss of the saints. Mighty is the power and wondrous is the grace of him who can destroy the tyrant who for centuries has gone forth conquering and prostrating before him one generation after another. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

THE RESURRECTION

I. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is purely a doctrine of revelation. It is learned from the Bible, not from nature. Those thoughtful heathen, who expressed a hope that the soul was immortal, never taught that the body would live again.

II. The great mass of infidels in every age have hated this doctrine, reviled it, and ridiculed it. When Paul preached it at Athens "some mocked." Acts 17:32. In the days of our Savior, the Sadducees, in their pride and folly, did the same thing. They framed absurd arguments against it, and insisted upon them as though they were true and unanswerable.

III. This doctrine has always been precious to the people of God, nor will they ever give it up. It is taught in the Old Testament, in the sermons of Jesus Christ, and in the writings of his apostles. It is found in the Creed of every evangelical church that is or ever has been upon earth. If God's word teaches it, it is true.

IV. When we say that Christ will raise the dead, we do not mean that he will create new bodies for his people, but that he will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:21. He will raise up the same body, the same material frame, with which the soul was formerly united. Paul expressly says that the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken our "mortal bodies." Romans 8:11.

V. Against the doctrine of the resurrection there has never been urged any objection, which was of any considerable force. It involves no absurdities. God has infinite knowledge, so that he ever knows how the same body that lies in the grave may be raised. And he has all power, so that at his bidding the necessary energy shall go forth to raise the dead. So that with Paul we may boldly say: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:8. With God nothing is impossible. Luke 1:37. From him nothing is hid. Matt. 10:26; Heb. 4:13; Job 26:6.

VI. This doctrine has been the stay of God's people in all ages. The reason why Abraham was so upheld in offering Isaac was, that he "accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." Heb. 11:19. In the midst of his great trials Job said: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." Job. 19:25-27.

VII. Later writers of the Old Testament teach the same doctrine. Thus says the evangelical prophet: "Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Isaiah 26:19. Compare Hos. 13:14. Still later the prophet Daniel says: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12:2.

VIII. Our Lord Jesus Christ often spoke of the "resurrection;" "the resurrection of the just;" "the resurrection of life;" "the resurrection of damnation;" "the children of the resurrection," who cannot "die any more." Matt. 22:30; Luke 14:14, 20:36; John 5:29.

IX. Christ's apostles taught the same doctrine. They "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:2; 17:18, 32;

24:21.

X. The Old Testament tells us of three, who were raised from the dead—the child of the widow of Sarepta, the Shunammite's child, and the man whose body was put into the sepulcher of Elisha. Our Lord Jesus raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus. And after Christ's resurrection many saints arose and showed themselves alive. Matt. 27:52, 53.

XI. The fullest discussion of the resurrection found in Scripture, is in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. It is too long to be here inserted. The reader will please turn to it and read it. This great discussion clears up many difficulties. A few remarks are offered for the right understanding of this chapter.

1. The key to the whole passage is found in the fact that Paul is writing to believers, and is mainly treating of the resurrection of the just. He is comforting believers, not warning sinners.
2. The doctrine of the resurrection must be held and taught. It is essential. Without it preaching is idle, and faith is vain. Verses 14, 17.
3. The resurrection of Christ and that of his people are so connected, that he who denies the one subverts the other. Because Christ rose his people must rise. Verses 12, 13.
4. This doctrine is very consolatory to the suffering people of God. Verses 19, 20. It always has been so.
5. Christ's work for his people would clearly be imperfect, if he did not raise them from the dead. Verses 21, 22.
6. Hard questions concerning the resurrection are foolish, and have not even the merit of being new. Verses 35, 36. They all proceed from ignorance.

7. Nature tells us of many things quite as far beyond explanation as the resurrection of the dead, such as the growth of grain. Verses 36-38. Yet who denies the facts in the case of the wheat? and why should we deny the facts in the resurrection?

8. It does not at all impair the doctrine of the resurrection that the body we shall then have will be very different from the body we now have. Verses 39-41. That is just what the Christian hopes for.

9. Some of the pious dead shall be raised in more glory than others. Verses 41, 42. One of the old prophets taught the very same thing. Dan. 12:3.

10. The resurrection body shall be fashioned by the Holy Spirit, and so shall be a spiritual body. Verse 44; compare Romans 8:1.

11. On the subject of the change effected by the resurrection, it is idle for us to indulge in conjecture. We can get no light on the subject beyond what is given in the Scripture. Verses 42-54. Wisdom will be content with what God there teaches us.

12. Because the change wrought in the resurrection will be very glorious, therefore the saints greatly desire it as the day of their triumph. Verses 54, 55. Elsewhere Paul says, they are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Romans 8:23.

13. This whole chapter in Paul's writings shows us how easy it is to fall into foolish mistakes and dangerous errors. Other Scriptures warn us directly on the subject. It is not easy to shun profane and vain babblings; for they naturally increase unto ungodliness. The errors of such eat like a cancer. 2 Tim. 2:16-18.

14. Paul's first inference from this doctrine is both logical and pleasing: "Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 57.

15. Another inference from the doctrine is no less fair or pleasing to the pious. It is this: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Verse 58.

XII. If these things are so, then it follows:

1. We ought not to mourn as those without hope for our friends who have died in the Lord. They sleep in Jesus. And if they so sleep, they do well.

2. If we are Christ's, our own flesh shall rest in hope. Death cannot harm us.

3. Let us lay fast hold of this doctrine, as Paul did. Hear him: "I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Acts 24:15, 16.

THE JUDGMENT

I. The doctrine of the judgment is very old. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, foretold it as clearly as any later prophet: "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 14, 15.

II. David speaks of the judgment in Psalm 1:5. But Asaph gives a full and clear account of it in the fiftieth Psalm. There he speaks of the grandeur of the event, of the Judge, of the persons to be judged, of the principles on which the judgment shall be conducted, and of the results of such judgment.

III. Our blessed Lord is still more clear and minute in the account he gives us of this great event in Matt. 25:31-46: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

In this passage these things are notable:

1. Men have seen Christ in his shame and suffering. In the judgment they shall see him in his glory. Ver. 31.
2. On that day he shall be attended by all the holy angels. Ver. 31.

3. Christ shall sit as a judge upon a throne. Once he stood, a poor, abused prisoner, at the bar of a weak creature, Pontius Pilate. It is very different now. Ver. 31. Compare John 5:22; Acts 17:31.

4. There never was such an assemblage of men as shall take place at the judgment. It shall consist of all nations. Ver. 32. Compare Romans 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10.

5. The last day will be a day of great and final separations. The sheep and goats will no longer herd together. Ver. 32, 33.

6. In the trial of saints, great prominence will be given to their deeds of love to Christ and his people. Ver. 35, 36.

7: It will then appear that real kindness to Christ's poor was as much esteemed by the Lord as if it had been shown to him in person. Ver. 40.

8. There is no more just ground of condemnation than lack of love to Christ. Ver. 42, 43. Compare 1 Cor. 16:22.

9. When his people suffer, Christ makes common cause with them. Their insults are his insults. Ver. 45.

10. The last day shall surprise all the saints. Ver. 37-39. It will no less surprise the wicked. Ver. 44. The righteous know that they deserve nothing good, and when great blessings come, they freely admit they are not worthy of them. On the other hand, the wicked, in their self-righteousness, think they deserve well at the hand of their Maker. We often hear them say as much.

11. The saints will be well off at last. Nothing can harm them. All good things are theirs. Ver. 34.

12. Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him. He shall depart accursed. Ver. 41.

13. The consequences of the judgment, both to saints and sinners, shall be lasting, most lasting, everlasting. Ver. 46. Compare Dan. 12:2.

IV. One event of history is, and is declared to be, a figure of the last judgment. It is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when there was great tribulation, such as never was before, nor since, nor ever shall be to the end of the world. If one would know something of the horrors of the last day, let him read Matthew 24 and Josephus' account of the destruction of the holy city.

V. The time of the judgment will be the end of the world, immediately following the resurrection. Matt. 13:39. The last transaction ever witnessed by earth will be the doom of the wicked.

VI. Some have asked, How long will the judgment last? It is called a day, the day, that day, the great day, the last day; but the term day does not necessarily fix a definite period of time. In speaking of God's long-suffering towards sinners, Peter says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Pet. 3:8. From this some have inferred that the judgment will last a thousand years. But the words hardly warrant such an inference. It is enough for us to know that the judgment will not end until God's justice is fully displayed, and until he has brought forth the righteousness of his people as the light and their judgment as the noonday.

VII. The MATTERS judged of in the last day will be:

1. Men's thoughts. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 15:26. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Proverbs 24:9. Then indeed shall the thoughts of many hearts be revealed. Wicked thoughts are Christ's great enemies. They ought to be exposed. There is nothing hid that shall not be known. Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17; 12:2.

2. Men will be judged for their words, good and bad. The Bible is explicit: "By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you

shall be condemned." Matt. 12:37. Yes, "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. 12:36.

3. Men shall be judged by and for their acts, both open and secret. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment: and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand: and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." 1 Tim. 5:24, 25. It must be so. It cannot be otherwise; for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13. God "will render to every man according to his deeds." Romans 2:6. This has always been the doctrine of God's prophets. Compare Psalm 28:4; Isaiah 59:18. If men receive the fruit of their own doings they have none to blame but themselves.

VIII. On the last day "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Pet.3:10. God shall fold up the heavens as a vesture, and they shall be changed. Heb. 1:12. No more place shall be found for any of the magnificent structures or cities of earth. Rev. 20:11.

IX. "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" 2 Pet. 3:12. Oh that we all may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

HEAVEN

I. No man on earth knows much of heaven. Every living man is of the earth, earthy. None of us have ever seen any world but this. We are slow to believe spiritual truths relating to things that must be done on earth; much more are we dull of understanding in regard to the

world of glory. So Jesus said: "If I have told you of earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" John 3:12.

II. And yet there is much fellowship between heaven and earth. But it is chiefly kept up by the angels. The ladder on which Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending has never been taken away, though we see it not. Gen. 28:12. Jesus said no man has ascended up to heaven. John 3:13. He thus taught us that no man then on earth had been to that bright world, and brought back a report of what he had seen and heard.

III. After Christ said these things Lazarus spent about four days in heaven, and came back to this world. But we have not any account of what he learned by his short abode there. Paul had many visions of the heavenly world; but what he tells us is chiefly negative: "I heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Cor. 12:1-7. When Paul says it was not lawful, he means that it was contrary to the divine will, that it was not edifying, or that he could not bring his mind to speak of heavenly things in any terms known to men. John also had many visions of glory; yet he too seems at a loss for words to give us an adequate idea of heaven.

IV. The Hebrews spoke of three heavens:

1. The atmospheric heavens—so we read of the fowls of heaven.
2. The firmament through which the stars pass—and so we read of the stars of heaven, or host of heaven.
3. The holy heaven, where God shows his glory to his children. This they called the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens, or simply heaven, or the heavens. Heavenly glory is spoken of as a crown, a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, an incorruptible crown, a crown of glory that fades not away. It is also called life, eternal life, everlasting life, a rest, glory, honor, immortality, a house not made with hands, our Father's house, the new heavens, the New

Jerusalem, a heavenly country, a better country, etc. Of this blessed abode God's word tells us the following things:

V. Heaven is a place. Jesus says so: "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2. It must be a place; for there are the glorified bodies of Enoch, of Elijah, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. Heaven is a very large place. The largest walled city of antiquity was fifteen miles square. But this great city is said to be fifteen hundred miles square. Rev. 21:16. We may regard this as figurative language, but the lesson is that heaven is not a little retired place in some remote corner of the universe. It is the largest city ever built, the greatest country ever heard of.

VII. Heaven is a fixed place. It "has foundations, and its builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10. The mountains shall melt, the sea be burnt up, the heavens pass away with a great noise, but heaven is as stable as the throne of God.

VIII. Negatively we know a good deal of heaven. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie;" "there shall be no more curse;" "there shall be no night there;" "without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie." Rev. 21:27; 22:3, 5, 15. The Lord Almighty will wipe away tears from off all faces, and forever take away the rebuke of his people; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Isaiah 25:8; Rev. 7:17; 21:4. And there shall be no more sea. Rev. 21:1. That is, there will be no longer any risk or difficulty in the saints having fellowship with each other; or there will be no more swelling troubles, rising tumults, which are often compared to raging waves of the sea.

IX. Great and good refreshments are there provided for the saints. There is the fountain of the water of life freely given to him that is athirst. Rev. 21:6. "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear

as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. 22:1, 2.

X. Then the society of the holy city is the very best. It is made up of the nations of them that are saved. Rev. 21:24. Not a choice spirit of earth shall fail to be there. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. 18:14. To these shall be joined the "elect angels," 1 Tim. 5:21, cherubim, seraphim, principalities, powers, all our elder brethren who kept their first estate.

XI. In heaven great advances shall be made in knowledge. How could it be otherwise? "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. 13:12.

XII. The church shall then be very glorious. "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto you. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace." Psalm 45:13-15. Compare Eph. 5:25-27. All this well suits what John saw—the church prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—the Lamb's wife. Rev. 21:2, 9.

XIII. All Scripture represents the final state of the church as lovely and admirable. "The building of the wall of the city was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." Much more is said to the same effect. See Rev 21:18-21.

XIV. Nothing can excel the blessed fellowship of the redeemed with God in glory. Even here it is very precious. 1 John 1:3. But there the

"tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Rev. 21:3, 22.

XV. Many Scriptures show that the Lord Jesus Christ is a very prominent object in heaven. He is the source of light and life and joy in that blessed world. There is a world of meaning in that one phrase, "The Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21:23. Compare John 14:3; 17:24; Phil. 1:23; 1 John 3:2; 1 Pet. 2:7. Without the presence of the glorified person of our Lord and Savior no place would be heaven.

XVI. Nor are God's children bold intruders into this heavenly bliss. They are welcome guests. They are not there in despite of truth and justice. They "have right to the tree of life," and so "enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14. Compare John 1:12; 1 John 1:9; Romans 10:4; Eph. 2:19, 21.

XVII. Let everyone ask himself the questions: "Am I a Christian? Am I fit for heaven? If I were to die to-day, would I go to Jesus?" If you are Christ's, you are living unto righteousness. Has he brought you unto God? Has he changed your heart? Has he redeemed you from all iniquity, and purified you unto himself as one of his peculiar people, zealous of good works? Tit. 2:14. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Romans 8:9. "If you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live: for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:13, 14. All others are vain pretenders.

HELL

I. A belief in hell is not confined to Christians. All nations, who have held to an existence beyond this life, have believed that there was a place of torment for the wicked. How the heathen came to hold this

doctrine may be disputed. But Christians learned it from the Old and New Testaments, where it is very clearly taught.

II. Hell is a place. It is so called—"this place of torment." Luke 16:28. It must be a place, for it is to be the abode of the wicked after their bodies shall be raised. Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28; Luke 12:5. Yet we know not where this place is. It would do us no good to know that. Wild and bold assertions have been made as to the locality of hell, but some one says: "We must here confess our ignorance, and shall be much better employed in studying how we may avoid this place of horror, than in laboring to discover where it is."

III. All the names given to this doleful place and to the sufferings there endured, are suited to fill us with dreadful apprehensions. It is called a prison. 1 Pet. 3:19; Rev. 20:7. There shall be confined all incorrigible criminals. It is called a pit—the bottomless pit. Rev. 20:3. Those who fall into it rise no more, but sink still lower forever and ever. It is called outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt. 8:12. It is called the blackness of darkness, Jude, 13, where no ray of light or hope ever enters. It is the darkness outside. It is called the second death, which is explained as being the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and forever tosses on its angry billows the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars. Rev. 21:8. It is called the place of torment. Luke 16:28. This cannot mean anything that can comfort, or calm, or quiet the soul. Perhaps there is not a more awful word in any language than our English word torment, unless it is its plural, torments, found in Luke 16:23.

IV. All the punishments inflicted on the wicked will be righteous. One of the most dreadful elements of their miseries will be their perfect justness. If the wicked could truly say that they had been unfairly dealt with, this would take away something, yes, much of the poignancy of their anguish. But because God is "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he," Deut. 32:4; therefore all pleas

of injustice will forever be set aside. Sin is an evil of such magnitude as to deserve all that God has ever threatened against it, or shall ever inflict upon it.

V. Yet the Scriptures freely admit that there will be different degrees of punishment among the wicked. To those who heard his words and sinned still, Christ said, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and the land of Sodom at the day of judgment, than for you." Matt. 11:22, 24. The same doctrine is taught in Romans 2:12; Heb. 10:28, 29.

VI. The punishment of those who die in their sins shall be everlasting. So teaches the Old Testament: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12:2. So teaches the New Testament. The Lord of Life and glory says of the wicked: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46. In both these verses we have the same word to express unending duration in the case of the righteous and of the wicked. If they do not prove that the punishment of sinners shall be eternal, they do not prove that the happiness of the righteous shall be everlasting. Thus we would take away all meaning from the word of God. By Paul God declares that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. 2 Thess. 1:9. Of certain reckless men Judas (not Iscariot) says that they are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Jude 13. Of others John says, "they shall be tormented day and night forever." Rev. 20:10. That these terms and phrases declare the punishment of the wicked to be unending, is very clear. Dwight says, "The phrase commonly rendered forever and ever, is found in the New Testament eighteen times. In fifteen instances it is applied to the glory, perfection, government, and praise of God. In one case (Rev. 22:5) it is said of the righteous in the future world, 'they shall reign forever and ever.'" In the other two instances it is applied to the sufferings of wicked

men, and once of wicked men as associated in misery with devils. Rev. 19:3; 20:10.

VII. The same doctrine is taught by fair and legitimate inference. Of Judas Iscariot our Lord said, "It had been good for that man if he had never been born." Matt. 26:24; Mark 14:21. Now if Judas merely suffered remorse here, and a temporary punishment in the next life, and yet at last attains to everlasting life in glory, it was good for him that he had been born. In this case it is certain that unending misery has followed transgression.

VIII. Nor is this all. Our Savior declared that the sin "against the Holy Spirit has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation," and "that it shall not be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come." Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10. Language could not be clearer. If a sin has no forgiveness, the sinner is forever under condemnation, and of course must be liable to endless punishment.

IX. Speaking of the doom of the wicked, our Lord declared that in their misery, "their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched." Mark 9:44, 46, 48. Is not this both clear and terrible?

X. Nor is this all. The Scriptures say: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2. But if the doctrine of Restorationists is true, this is no more the accepted time and the day of salvation, than some hundreds or thousands of years hence will be.

XI. When Jesus Christ was upon earth he said, "The night comes when no man can work." John 9:4. But if we are to believe the doctrines of some modern errorists, there is a great deal of work done in the grave; yes, some men do all their work after the night has come. Many other Scriptures might be quoted to the same effect.

XII. Some men say God is too good to send them to hell forever. But a God who is too good to do such a thing, is certainly too good to say

that he would do it. And he has often said he will do it. Dare any say he is a false witness? Others in like manner declare their confidence in the divine mercy—the very mercy which they slight and abuse. Have they forgotten the awful words of the evangelical prophet? "He who made them will not have mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favor." Isaiah 27:11. Or have they forgotten the no less awful words of the apostle? "He shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy." Jas. 2:13.

CONCLUSION.

1. Let all men beware of the leaven of false doctrine. To old and young, to wise and simple, its approaches are cunning. The enemies of the truth are full of guile. They boast. They flatter. They cozen. They have no mercy.

2. Sin is a dreadful thing. No wise man makes light of it. Its fruits are bitterness and death. If men would avoid eternal wailings, let them cease to do evil, and learn to do well.

3. How glorious is the work of Christ. He saves from sin. He saves from wrath. He saves from an eternal hell.

4. What a mercy it is to be allowed to live in a gospel land, to hear the gospel call, and to know that hearty prayer will be heard. Soon it will be different, when once the Master of the house shall have risen up and shut the door. Luke 13:23-28.

5. No prospects are so dark or dismal as those of impenitent men. Oh that they were wise!

HOW TO USE THE BIBLE

The Bible is the profoundest book in the world. Other books contain the thoughts of men; this is full of the thoughts of God. It informs us of the nature, will, and government of God; it treats of the nature, offices, and destiny of angels; it tells us when, where, how, and for what man was made; it informs us of the original and of the end of all things. Events that have occurred in the remotest antiquity, and events that shall occur in the latest futurity, are alike familiar to inspired men. Time, in its relations to an eternity past and to an eternity to come, all the loftiest themes of human thought, all the deepest mysteries of human guilt and divine mercy, things at once the most glorious and the most terrible, are discoursed of with reverent familiarity in the sacred volume.

Nor is the Bible less practical than it is profound. There is not a duty that it does not enjoin; not a sin that it does not forbid. It always favors truth and virtue. It makes perpetual war on sin and error. To obey it perfectly is to attain all the highest ends of existence. To disobey it in the least is to court shame and misery. It is thus above all other books useful. It is the revelation of the mind of God to man for his own eternal salvation, and for the everlasting glory of the Creator of heaven and earth.

"What says the Scripture?" "How do you read it?" are therefore most pertinent and pregnant questions, whenever religious doctrine or duty is concerned. All contempt of the word of God is therefore foolish, dangerous, and monstrous. "If they escaped not, who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven." "He who rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, it shall judge him in the last day." "He therefore that despises, despises not man, but God." "Wisdom is too high for a fool." "Fools die for want of wisdom." To abuse or even to neglect the Bible is to covet death. To slight it is to despise our own mercies.

TRANSLATIONS

The lawfulness of translating the Scriptures into the languages spoken by the common people is generally conceded. The church of Rome, indeed, in all her missions to the heathen for two centuries past, is said not to have produced a single translation of God's word for the use of the people, who are perishing for lack of vision; yet even she admits the lawfulness of translations. The Vulgate in Latin, the Douay in English, and Martini's Bible in Italian, are all uninspired versions of holy writ. We have also the example of Christ and his apostles, who freely quoted the Septuagint, which was the Greek translation of the Scriptures in common use in their day. This example settles the question. Though in case of doubt the originals must be regarded as the very words of the Holy Spirit, yet the reason for making translations is as strong as for preaching in the language understood by the audience. Paul says; "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." When the Bible was given, it was given in languages well understood by those to whom it was addressed. When those languages are not generally understood, translations are necessary.

THE BIBLE CALLS FOR EXAMINATION.

For various reasons we are bound to examine the Scriptures. It is peculiarly pleasant to find the word of God itself so clear on this very point. The Bible is not an amulet. It works not as a charm. Nor was it intended merely to garnish a chamber or a parlor. By Moses God said: "These words, which I command you this day shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you risest up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates." It is impossible to give any fair interpretation of this passage, which does not imply the duty of becoming well acquainted with the word of God. The ordinary method of doing this is by reading it, by hearing it, by thinking and

speaking of it. David tells us what was his practice on this subject: "Your word have I hid in my heart;" "I will delight myself in your statutes;" "I will not forget your word." Jeremiah says; "Your words were found and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." When Jesus Christ came, he gave a clear and plain command on the subject; "Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." To the Colossians Paul says; "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

Shall God speak, and man not hear? Shall he reveal his will, and we not study to know it? "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." "We thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God, which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." The Bible is God's word to man. He has commanded us to search it. We are guilty if we obey not. Our right to do so who shall challenge? "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children."

THE FATHERS.

Nor did pious men within the first five centuries of the apostles vary in their testimony on this subject. They all held and taught that it was the right and the duty of the people to read and judge for themselves. It is refreshing to one's spirit to find how eagerly they studied God's word, and by all proper means encouraged others to do the same. Chrysostom says: "Is it not absurd, that, in money matters, men will not trust to others, but the counters are produced, and the sum cast up; yet, in their soul's affairs, men are led and drawn away by the opinions of others, and this when they have an exact scale and an

exact rule, namely, the declaration of the divine laws? Therefore, I entreat and beseech you all, that, not minding what this or that man may say about these things, you would consult the holy Scriptures concerning them."

The emperor Constantine, before the Council of Nice, knew that he was appealing to the common mind of the fathers assembled, when he said: "The books of the evangelists and apostles, and the prophetic oracles, plainly inform us what opinions and sentiments to entertain concerning God; therefore, laying aside all unfriendly contention, let us proceed to debate and prove the things in question from the sacred writings."

Jerome said; "Love the Scriptures, and wisdom will love you." Both of himself and another of the fathers it is related, that when they sat at their tables, and when they lay down to sleep, they had God's word read to them. Tertullian says; "I adore the fullness of Scripture; I do not admit what you bring in of your own without Scripture." Theodoret says: "Do not offer reasons and arguments that are human, and drawn from the authority of men. I believe and obey only the holy Scripture."

Basil says: "Let the divinely inspired Scripture determine the whole controversy among us." Justin Martyr says: "We must know, by all means, that it is not lawful or possible to learn anything of God, or of right piety, save out of the prophets, who teach us by divine inspiration." Augustine says; "Take and read the Scriptures, for whatever is in them is high and divine; there is verily truth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshment and renewing of men's minds, and truly so tempered that everyone may draw with a devout and pious mind, as true religion requires."

So full and uniform is the testimony of the fathers on the general obligation to study God's written word, that Fenelon, in his celebrated letter to the Bishop of Arras, "On the Reading of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular," speaks as follows: "I think that in our

days persons have taken useless trouble to prove what is incontestable, to wit, that during the primitive ages of the church,

GREAT STUDENTS OF THE BIBLE.

That we may see what can be done in becoming acquainted with the Bible, and that we may be awakened to imitate so good examples, let us look at a few facts. Eusebius tells us of one who had his eyes burnt out in the Dioclesian persecution, and who repeated, in a public assembly, the very words of Scripture, with as much accuracy as if he had been reading them. Jerome says of Nepotian, that by reading and meditation he had made his soul a library of Christ. Theodosius, the younger, was so familiar with the word of God, that he made it a subject of conversation with the old bishops, as if he had been one of them. Augustine says, that after his conversion, he ceased to relish even Cicero, his former favorite author, and that the Scriptures were his pure delight. Tertullian spent a great part of his time in reading the Scripture, and committed large portions of them to memory. In his youth, Beza learned all Paul's epistles in Greek so thoroughly, that when he was eighty years old he could repeat them in that language. Cranmer is said to have been able to repeat the whole of the New Testament from memory. Luther was one of the most indefatigable students of the Bible that the world has ever seen. Ridley said; "The wall and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness that there I learned by heart almost all the epistles; of which study, although in time a greater part was lost, yet the sweet savor thereof I trust I shall carry with me to heaven." Sir John Hartop, a man of many cares, made the book of God so much his study, that it lay before him night and day. A French nobleman used to read three chapters of the Bible every day, on his bended knees, with his head uncovered. Joshua Barnes is said to have read a small pocket Bible a hundred and twenty times over. Mr. Roger Cotton read the whole Bible through twelve times a year. The Rev. William Romaine studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life. John Boyse, one of the translators of our Bible, had read all the Scriptures before he was five years old. His mother

read them through twelve times. Some have read the Bible through many times in a year. I have read of more than one, of whom it was said, that if the Bible had been lost, the whole might have been recovered from their memories. In short, was there ever an eminent Christian who was not remarkable for his study of Scripture, as he had opportunity?

STRIKING TESTIMONIES TO THE BIBLE.

The Bible does indeed contain aliment for feeble minds. Even little children may be made wise and good by its heavenly truths. But there is nothing more idle than the flippancy of some, who speak of the Scriptures as unsuited to strong mind. The mightiest intellects of modern times have paid profound homage to the sacred writings. Lord Bacon, the father of the only sound method of philosophizing, says; "There never was found, in any age of the world, either religion, or law, or discipline, that did so highly exalt the public good, as the Christian faith." Sir Robert Boyle says: "The Bible is a matchless volume. It is impossible we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly." Sir Isaac Newton says: "we account the Scriptures of God the sublimest philosophy." John Milton says; "there are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion." Locke says: "The gospel has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Selden says: "There is no book in the universe upon which we can rest our souls, in a dying moment, but the Bible." Similar testimonies might be almost indefinitely increased. Take this one additional. Byron spent his days in guilt and folly, but his conscience and his genius paid homage to Scripture. Not long before his death he wrote these lines on the blank leaf of a Bible:

"Within this awful volume lies

The mystery of mysteries.

Happiest they of human race,

To whom their God has given grace

To read, to hear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch—to force the way;
And better they had ne'er been born,
Than read to doubt, or read to scorn."

At another time he said: "Indisputably the firm believers in the gospel have a great advantage over all others, for this simple reason, that, if it be true, they will have their reward hereafter; and if there be no hereafter, they can be but with the infidel, in his eternal sleep, having had the assistance of an exalted hope through life."

THE RIGHT SPIRIT.

In all matters the spirit that actuates men has been felt and acknowledged to be important. It is so in learning any art or science. In studying God's word, the importance of a right spirit cannot be overestimated. The want of it produces more miscarriages than all other causes united. Some minds are so full of prejudices that their progress in divine knowledge is painfully slow. Nothing is more opposed to docility, or to our advancement in learning, than a state of mind forearmed against the truth. Impartiality is difficult of attainment, but is essential to success.

Prejudices sometimes lie against particular doctrines of the Bible, and men come to God's word, not to find out what it teaches, but to discover some means of getting rid of unwelcome truths. Anything favoring their errors is seized with avidity, but anything warring on their preconceived opinions is carefully avoided. The truth is, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," against all his nature, all his will, all his word, so that "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." How many who give some signs of seriousness, yet reject or slight parts of Scripture, as Solomon's song, Hosea, or the Epistles of Paul! The very books

they fail to study contain, perhaps, the best correctives of their faults of character. Some profess little regard for the Old Testament, calling it the "old law," and at the same time would persuade us that they had a wonderful regard for the New Testament. But "the two Testaments, like the two cherubim, look stedfastly towards each other, and towards the mercy-seat, which they encompass." Whoever neglects the Old Testament must have very disjointed views of truth; must be in darkness on some very important subjects; must be ready to follow many wild opinions on vital points of doctrine, and embrace a system destitute of all good proportions. If the Old Testament is not true, neither is the New. If the types of the former were not given by God, the antitypes of the latter are fallacious. He who rejects the Old Testament is already more than half an infidel, and will soon be wholly so, unless capable of some happy inconsistency of character. "The Scripture is so penned that they who have a mind to know, may know; they who have a mind to wrangle, may take occasion enough of offence, and justly perish by the rebellion of their own minds; for God never intended to satisfy men of stubborn and perverse spirits." Read the whole Scripture; read it with candor.

MAKE DILIGENT SEARCH.

"The book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." The Bereans are commended for searching the Scriptures DAILY. The great law of acquisition in knowledge, as indeed, to a great extent, of wealth also, is "a little at a time, and often repeated." "The hand of the diligent makes rich." He, whose mind dwells on divine truth, shall abound in the knowledge of God.

REVERENCE.

There is no more important qualification of a student of God's word than profound reverence for sacred things. To everyone who opens the lids of this matchless, awful volume, God says: "Put off your shoes from off your feet; for the place whereon you stand is holy ground;" "Sanctify the Lord Almighty himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread;" "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Lightness of mind in any man shows a heart wholly unprepared to profit by the sacred volume. Irreverence in such study is profanity. The only way in which God's truth profits triflers is by first curing their levity, and then making them wise. Of all dispositions unfriendly to the successful study of divine truth, none is more prominent than a fondness for jesting with sacred things. Luther said: "Whom God would destroy, he first permits to sport with Scripture."

"Read and revere the sacred page—a page,

Which not the whole creation could produce,

Which not the conflagration shall destroy."

PRAYER.

As man's intellectual dependence on God is absolute, nothing is more proper in every student of the Bible than hearty prayer. A prayerless student of God's word never attained the wisdom of the just, never became wise unto salvation, never became mighty in the Scriptures. On the other hand, he who never opened the sacred volume but with earnest crying to God for divine illumination, never died a fool. No act that man can perform is more reasonable than offering such petitions as these: "Teach me your statutes;" "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law;" "Give me understanding;" "Incline my heart unto your testimonies." If man ever needs help from on high, it is when endeavoring to learn the will of God for his own salvation. One of the most successful students of

the Bible during the last century tells us how he perused the blessed volume: "I spread the Hebrew Bible before God, and cried to the Father, that, for the sake of his Son, he would by the Spirit shine on it, unto me, give light into, and discover his mind in the word; that he would give me life, health, strength, time and inclination to the study, and a blessing thereon; that he would teach me how to manage that work, and would pity me as to sleep, having been somewhat bereaved of sleep since I was determined to that work." "If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally, and upbraids not."

MODESTY.

Such are the weakness and limits of the human mind, and such is the sublimity of the matters brought to our notice in the Scriptures, that nothing is more reasonable than unaffected modesty in every student of the Bible. The profoundest scholars in every branch of knowledge have been the brightest patterns of ingenuous self-distrust. "I see," said Sir Isaac Newton, after his great discoveries had been made, "I seem to be walking on the shore of a boundless ocean, and only to have picked up a few pebbles." The words of Milton, at the opening of his great poem, have often been quoted as evincing the same unfeigned sense of weakness:

"And chiefly you, O Spirit, that do prefer

Before all temples the upright heart and pure,

Instruct me, for you know'st...

.....what in me is dark

Illumine; what is low, raise and support."

Nor are the Scriptures silent on so necessary a matter. "See you a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Our Lord chiefly refers to this low estimate of ourselves, when

he says: "Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Such subjects as God's nature, counsels and government; as man's dependence and freedom, his obligations and destiny; such themes as time and eternity, life and death, sin and holiness, heaven and hell, are not to be justly understood by the proud and self-sufficient.

FAITH.

One of the most essential qualifications of a Bible student is true faith, an unfaltering reliance on the testimony of God, as true and sure to be accomplished. "We walk by faith." In proportion as any human character has shone illustriously, it has been remarkable for freedom from blind credulity and from carping skepticism. There never was a truly great mind that believed without evidence, or refused to believe upon sufficient evidence. In the Bible the God who cannot lie testifies, and every wise man believes what he says, even if he cannot see the reason of all things, yes, if some things seem contrary to his past judgments of them. When Luther was at Coburg, he wrote to a friend: "I was lately looking out of my window at night, and I saw the stars in the heavens, and God's great, beautiful arch over my head, but I could not see any pillars on which the great Builder had fixed this arch; and yet the heavens fell not, and the great arch stood firmly. There are some who are always feeling for the pillars, and longing to touch them; and because they cannot touch them, they stand trembling and fearing lest the heavens would fall. If they could only grasp the pillars, then the heavens would stand fast. Just so, many seem full of doubt, forgetting that the Scripture must be all fulfilled." If you come to search the Scriptures, "have faith in God."

THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

Of all the dispositions requisite to the profitable study of Scripture, none is more important than a sincere, constant, and ardent love of the truth. Indeed it is the foremost of all qualifications. He who loves

his own opinions, or those of his sect or party, more than the truth of God, is a candidate for shame. Without this love of truth no man has ever made any considerable progress in knowledge. It is indispensable. Nothing can compensate for the want of it. It has been a prominent trait of every good man's character. Job says: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." David says: "My soul breaks for the longing it has unto your commandments at all times;" "How sweet are your words unto my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth;" "I love your commandment above gold, yes, above fine gold." Solomon says: "If you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding: if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures: then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Peter says: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." This love of truth is God's sure pledge of guidance and enlargement in the knowledge of his will. He who has it, will "receive the engrafted word with meekness."

MEDITATION.

It is very important that we reflect much on God's word. Reading and hearing are sowing the seed; meditation is harrowing it in. The psalmist says: "I will meditate in your precepts;" "O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day;" "My eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in your word." Such a student of the Bible will not fail to make progress. "Meditation, to the book of revelation, is like the microscope to the book of nature; it is sure to discover new beauties." It is much to be regretted that some readers of Scripture so seldom give themselves time to reflect on what they have read. They derive not half the profit from Scripture that they would by a different course.

THINK FOR YOURSELF.

Nothing that has been said was intended to impair independence of thought and freedom of inquiry. Let every man do his own thinking.

Let him settle first principles cautiously, and hold them firmly. David says: "I have stuck unto your testimonies." He could not in stronger terms have expressed his firm adherence to known truths. An inspired apostle says: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The Bible inculcates humility, but not servility of mind. Lord Bacon well says: "Disciples do owe unto masters only a temporary belief, and suspension of their own judgments until they be fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation, or perpetual captivity." Let every thought and imagination be brought into captivity to Christ; but call no man master. Think for yourself.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU KNOW.

The Scriptures are designed, not to fill the mind with notions, but for practical purposes. The word of God should regulate our thoughts and affections, our speech and behavior. Thus David says: "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all your commandments;" "I will keep your statutes;" "A young man shall cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to your word;" "I will keep the commandments of my God." Christ said: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." James says: "Be you doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Practice makes sure our knowledge in a way that nothing else does. It is so in the exact sciences, in the useful and ornamental arts; above all it is so in religious truth. Practice is the very life of piety, the very end of divine teachings.

HELPS IN UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE.

In learning the will of God, it is proper to avail ourselves of all the aid we can get. Indeed we are bound to do so. Let, then, diligent use be made of the common English Bible. One of the great wants of our time is that of a thorough acquaintance, in teachers and in the taught, with the general statements of Scripture. By its light thousands have been led to reflection, to repentance, to wisdom, to Christ, to God, to heaven. Read, read, read your English bible. Its epic and lyric poetry, its narratives and parables, its precepts and appeals, are incomparable, and its doctrines are heavenly truth. Dr. Chalmers says: "Many a cottage patriarch, with no other medium than his mother tongue, becomes a greater proficient in the wisdom and doctrines of the Bible, than the most accomplished linguist or grammarian."

A FRIEND MAY AID US.

We may often obtain much assistance, in understanding the Scriptures, from a friend, although he may not be superior to ourselves in many other things. Naaman, the Syrian, gained very important information from a little captive maid, even when the king of her own country could not have given it. The Ethiopian eunuch was greatly assisted in understanding the prophet Isaiah by Philip, the evangelist. From Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos learned the way of God "more perfectly" than he had learned it before. Be not ashamed to learn from any man. Compare his views with Scripture, and if sound, thankfully embrace them.

REFERENCE BIBLES.

One of the most important helps to the knowledge of God's word is a good reference Bible. We are thus able without difficulty to compare Scripture with Scripture. The man who of all others in the last generation, probably made the greatest proficiency in a knowledge of the Scriptures, has said: "Along with other means, consulting well selected marginal references, forms one of the best helps for fixing the word of God in the memory; leading the mind to a just

interpretation of it, and, in many cases, rendering it most affecting to the heart. It tends powerfully to counteract all skeptical doubts, when every part of Scripture is thus found (like the stones in an arch) to support and receive support from the rest. It serves also to satisfy the mind as to the meaning of disputed passages, when one sense is found manifestly to accord with the rest of the sacred word, and other interpretations evidently run counter to them." In these thoughts many will recognize the serious and judicious style of Dr. Thomas Scott. Bishop Horsley also says: "Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. It is incredible to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume furnish for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history, shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith."

CONCORDANCES.

"A concordance is an index to the Bible, wherein all the words used through the inspired writings are arranged alphabetically, and the various places where they occur are referred to, to assist us in finding out passages, and comparing the several significations of the same word. A work of this kind, which tends so much to render the study of the holy Scriptures more easy to all Christians, must be acknowledged to be very useful; for if a good index to any other book is to be valued, much more ought one to the Bible, which is a revelation from God, given as the only rule of our faith and practice, to discover to us the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ." Besides the use commonly made of the concordance, it often furnishes admirable facilities for finding out all the Bible says on a

given subject, or at least so much of it as may be necessary for a comprehensive view. Let any man read all the texts given in the best concordances, under these words and their cognates, namely, prayer, praise, humility, fear, hope, faith, love, patience, and many others, and he will have a fund of knowledge on these subjects which he will find of great use. Many of the best sermons may be composed in this way. In English, Brown's concordance is too brief to be of much service; Butterworth's has been mutilated and greatly injured; Cruden's is by far the best.

COMMENTARIES.

Commentaries are also very useful helps, some of them very much so. Among commentaries on the whole Bible, you will find none better than those of Scott and Henry. Though the latter did not live to complete his work, yet he left some notes on the last part of Scripture, which several friends filled up. Henry is remarkable for sprightliness, ingenuity, and the practical application of divine truth. His commentary contains by far the best collection of striking sayings in our language. On the historical parts of the Scripture, and on the parables, he is admirable. His early acquaintance with law enabled him to draw many useful illustrations from that noble science. Dr. Scott is remarkable for gravity, clearness and judiciousness. Like Henry, he is thoroughly evangelical. Into the hands of one asking what commentary I would recommend, I have often put a volume of each of these authors, and told him to judge for himself. The result has been that about as many have chosen one as the other. The commentary of Dr. Gill, though voluminous, and to some extent a translation of Poole, is not esteemed as much as it deserves to be. The commentary of Dr. Clarke is learned, but is often fanciful, and sometimes very unsound in doctrine. On the New Testament it is pleasing to see that the public still highly values Doddridge's Exposition. The expositions of particular books of Scripture are too numerous to mention. Many of them are worthless, and some of them are of the highest value. Of all these, my favorite is Leighton's Practical Commentary on the first Epistle of Peter. It is

sufficiently learned, and has the sweetest savor of piety throughout. No good man can read it without finding his resolutions to lead a holy life greatly strengthened; and no bad man will be apt to read it through, for its appeals to the conscience are so pungent, that any one not utterly stupid will either cease to read it attentively, or fall under deep conviction of sin.

ANTIQUITIES.

It is a great help to the right understanding of God's word to have an acquaintance with the geography, manners, customs, laws and history, of the countries and people mentioned in the Bible. The facilities for obtaining this kind of knowledge are so numerous, that it is not necessary to name particular works. The truth is, all sound knowledge expands the mind, and is useful. Any science, truly so called, may furnish illustrations of Scripture that will give them vividness in our minds, and fix them in our memory.

GOOD DEFINITIONS.

A good definition is a rare thing, and yet it should be sought, in every science, at as early a stage as possible. Such definitions are often found in catechisms. They abound in the Larger and Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly. Any solid objection to catechetical instruction must lie against the particular book used. Any objection urged against this mode of instruction, lies with equal force against all our schools of every grade, for all of them that are valuable do much practice catechizing as a mode of instruction. Of the utility of catechisms in teaching divine truth, the world has had ample proof. Archbishop Tillotson says he thinks it a true observation, "That catechizing, and the history of the martyrs, have been the two main pillars of the Protestant religion." Milk for babes, and strong meat for men, is the Bible rule. He who has in his mind no definition of God, of his attributes, or great works of creation and providence, of sin, of justification, of sanctification, &c., will be

comparatively ill prepared to make solid or systematic attainments in divine knowledge.

ADVANTAGES OF STUDYING THE BIBLE.

The Scriptures not only enjoin the study of the sacred volume, but they give us weighty reasons for doing so. The highest reason for any act is that it is agreeable to the will of God. In this matter his command is clear and decisive. This binds the conscience of the regenerate. But there are good reasons for all God's commands, and sometimes, as in this case, he makes them known to us. To search the Scriptures is in many ways profitable.

The study of God's word greatly enlarges our minds, and gives them extended views on the most sublime and important subjects. However much one's mind is inclined to driveling, the evil disposition must to a great extent be counteracted by the serious study of God's word. Thus that gross ignorance, which is the shame of many, would be to a pleasing extent removed, and, in lieu of it, the light of divine truth would shine abroad. The mind of man, under divine guidance, is capable of indefinite improvement. Who can set bounds to knowledge, when the immortal mind of man is the learner, God's word the text-book, and God's Spirit the teacher? "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." One who had bent his mind in this direction, has left us this delightful testimony: "You, through your commandments, have made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep your precepts." The whole creation has no such storehouses of wisdom as the sacred volume. "Your testimonies are wonderful." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." The Bible is the only sure safeguard against heresy, fanaticism, and all the wild disorders of mind and of society. "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures," is the brief history of religious errorists of every age. Without this anchor, men will be driven about with every

wind of doctrine. A taste for the word of God expels a taste for vain pursuits.

GOD'S WORD ABIDES FOREVER.

"Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven." Men and mountains, seas and systems may change, but the word of the Lord endures forever. "The Scripture cannot be broken." Its teachings are not yes and nay, but yes and amen. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." His counsels are of old, faithfulness and truth. Even "the word spoken by angels was steadfast." The covenant of his peace shall stand. "There has not failed one word of all his good promise." No change of place, no lapse of time, no march of science, no reverse of fortune, no progress of revolution, can change one whit of all that God has spoken.

THE SCRIPTURES ARE MIGHTY.

The sayings of great and wise men have been useful, but what thoughts of mere men ever had such power as the word of God? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." "Is not my word like a fire? Says the Lord; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

THE BIBLE FOR THE AFFLICTED.

"Unless your law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction," said one, and thousands have felt as much. "Remember your word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for your word has quickened me." "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; yet

your commandments are my delights." Millions have had the same experience. One of the most mournful sights on earth is a human being overwhelmed in sorrow, yet leaning on no divine promise. To such all seasonable truth is strange. On the other hand earth presents no spectacle more full of the moral sublime, than that of a child of God in deep distress, yet embracing the promises, and staying himself on God.

IT HELPS THE TEMPTED.

One of the sorest kinds of affliction to a virtuous mind is temptation; nor is there any successful mode of repelling the assaults of the great adversary, but by replying, as did our Lord, "It is written, it is written, it is written." Accordingly Paul taught the Ephesians to "take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Such is the heavenly temper of this blade, that even devils cannot resist it. Therefore constancy in the Christian profession is not to be expected in those who are ignorant of God's word; for "knowledge shall be the stability of your times." The great nourisher of good hopes and just principles in man is God's word; for "whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." When all men shall know what this means, "man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," then the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and his glory shall lighten the earth.

THE BIBLE SHOWS THE WAY OF SALVATION.

The crowning excellence of Scripture is that it teaches us the way of salvation. The gospel is called "the word of this salvation," and "the word of reconciliation." "Search the Scriptures," said Christ, "for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Faith comes by hearing the word of God. The very highest end of existence is to glorify God in the salvation of the soul. He who is infallibly taught the true and only method of deliverance from sin,

from guilt, and from misery, and the true method of obtaining pardon, acceptance, and purity, has learned at once the hardest and the sublimest lesson that God ever teaches to man. Salvation secured, a blissful eternity follows; the soul lost, all is lost. By holding up Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life; by pointing us to the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world; by denying access to God in any other way than through atoning blood, and by assuring us of all blessings in the name of Jesus, the word of God removes an amount of uncertainty and perplexity, which otherwise must be our ruin. Nor is the Scripture a dead letter. It is life, and it is spirit. In the hands of the Holy Spirit its energy is resistless. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth;" "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light;" "Every word of God is pure;" "Sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth;" "Concerning the works of men, by the word of your lips have I kept myself from the paths of the destroyer;" "Moreover by them [your commandments] is your servant warned; and in keeping of them is great reward." Christ himself said: "My mother and my brethren are these, which hear the word of God and do it." Paul parting with the elders of Ephesus, could say no kinder thing than this: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

CONCLUSION.

We live in a remarkable age. Having so great a treasure as God's word, we are bound both to study it and to scatter it abroad. If the Bible Society does not deserve our support, nothing does. Dr. Johnson has well said: "If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he who withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbor as himself. He who voluntarily perpetuates ignorance, is guilty of all that ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a light-house, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwreck." "Hold forth the word of life."

"Let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

MONERGISM BOOKS

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