

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF OUR ADVERSARIES DESTROYS THE IDEA WHICH THE SCRIPTURES GIVE US OF THE GREATNESS OF GOSPEL MYSTERIES AND THE NATURE OF TRUE FAITH.

As the principles which we oppose exceedingly depreciate the love of God and the compassion of Jesus to sinful men, so they are equally unfavourable and irreconcilable to what the Scriptures say, about the *greatness* of gospel-mysteries, and the *nature* of true faith. For, if Jesus Christ be a mere man, who can understand the apostle, when he says, "Without controversy GREAT IS THE MYSTERY of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory?" 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The mystery of the incarnation, as we profess to believe it, is great and sublime. Such it is, whether we consider the ineffable union of the human nature with the Divine; or the marvellous condescension and love which are manifested by it; or the important consequences of such an union. But we do not, we cannot see how the birth of a mere man, who is born in flesh, because he could not be born otherwise, can be reckoned *a great mystery*. To speak accurately, and to reason justly, on the hypothesis of our opposers, we should rather look for mysteries in the *terms of Scripture*, that in the *objects of religion*. So that we should not say, "Great is the mystery of godliness;" but, "Great is the mystery of the *language* which is used by the apostles." For the chief difficulties found in our divinity lay in the *objects* of it; whereas

those which principally affect their scheme, lay in the *terms* of Scripture. But, as the holy Scriptures were intended, by a gracious God, to be the rule of faith and practice to the most illiterate, its *language* ought not to be the chief source of difficulties. Yet, as the *objects* of the gospel are sublime and incomprehensible, it is no wonder if they occasion the principal part of that obscurity which we find in the sacred volume.

Let us now consider this passage a little more attentively. By the *mystery of godliness*, we must here understand the doctrine of the gospel. This is evident from the following enumeration of particulars, which constitute the great subject of the gospel-ministry. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Now, I demand of those who believe that Jesus Christ is a mere man by nature, what is the meaning of these words, "God was manifest in the flesh?" If it be this, "The man Jesus conversed among men;" the mystery, certainly, is not great. It is, indeed, surprising, that Enoch and Elijah were translated into heaven, and that Christ was received up into glory, because heaven is not naturally a place for bodies; but that a mere man was seen upon earth, and conversed among other men, was never wondered at by any. Besides, who does not perceive that these words, "God was manifest in the flesh," imply a distinction, point out an opposition, between *God*, whom we cannot see, and *a body*, which we can see; between God, who is *spiritual*; and flesh, which is *sensible*? But what will become of this opposition, and of the reality of this mystery, if the true God was not manifest in the flesh?

“Jesus Christ,” they will say, “though a mere man by nature, is called GOD, because he represents Him.” —But will this justify the expressions before us? Kings are called *gods*, because they in some sense represent God; yet who ever said of a sovereign prince, “Without controversy, *great is the mystery of royalty*; God was manifest in the flesh?” The gentlemen with whom we contend are not aware, that they make a ridiculous match of *real* flesh and a *true* manifestation, with a *metaphorical* God: whereas they should unite one that is *properly* called God, with real flesh and a true manifestation. For that which makes, I will not say the *greatness* of the mystery, but the *truth* of it, is, *the opposition* implied between what is signified by the term *God*, and what is intended by the word *flesh*. Now, there is an opposition between flesh, and one that is properly called God; but there is none at all between a *metaphorical* God and *real* flesh. In what, then, does the greatness of this mystery consist; “God was manifest in the flesh?”

Perhaps they may answer, “In the glory of Divine power, with which Christ was invested when he conversed upon earth; which appeared in such miracles, and in so great a number, that it seemed as if God himself was come down to inhabit flesh.”—But if so, the mystery of the gospel has nothing in it more surprising than that of the law; and we may find, in Moses, as well as in Jesus Christ, “God manifest in the flesh.” For Moses appeared invested with a power, which acted on all the parts of nature, as if he had been the Lord of the world. And did not the apostles work miracles? Yes; and greater, in some respects, than those of their Divine Master, in pursuance of his own promise. The glory of God’s

power, therefore, was manifest in them. Yet, in what page of the New Testament is it said of any apostle, "God was manifest in the flesh?" Further: either the miracles of Christ showed that the Divine power resided in him, as in its *original*; and then our opposers must acknowledge that he is the true God; or they were the effects of a *derived* power, and so God himself performed them by his ministry and at his request; which is true of the apostles; and so we may say of them, as well as of Christ, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

But in what consists the greatness of the mystery, thus understood? Is it so uncommon, is it so astonishing, that God should exert and display his power, on important occasions, and for his own glory, at the request of a prophet, or of an apostle? Would it have been proper to say, when Elijah made fire to descend from heaven, to confound the impiety of Baal's worshippers, "God was manifest in the flesh?" Certainly, as these expressions are so singular and so emphatical, and as they were unknown before the incarnation, they must refer to a very wonderful object, and a very mysterious fact, a most astonishing and important fact, which had no existence till "the Word was made flesh." For, as language is adapted to the objects it represents, the singularity of expressions indicates, if the writer be honest and wise, a singularity in the object which is represented by them. As the language of the law would have appeared new and extraordinary to the ancient gentiles, so would the language of the gospel to those that lived under the law; because the objects of the law are very different from those of nature, and the objects of the gospel from those of the law. What, then, shall we

think of these new and uncommon expressions, "God was manifest in the flesh;" if they do not signify a new and wonderful object, unknown to nature, unknown to the law?

The interpretation which our adversaries put upon this passage is inconsistent with the language of the apostle. For, according to him, GOD is manifested, or appears in flesh; but, according to them, *flesh* is manifested, or appears to be God; the term *flesh*, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, frequently signifying the human nature. Socinus teaches, that he who is by nature flesh, is exalted so as to be called GOD; because he represents God in a wonderful manner: so that we have flesh first, and then a manifestation, or representation of God. But Paul informs us, that he who was God appears in flesh; consequently, he suggests the idea of GOD, prior to that of *manifestation in the flesh*. This is the first and most natural impression of his words.

When the prophet gives that exalted character, IMMANUEL, to Jesus Christ; we immediately conceive of him as possessed of such perfections as cannot belong to a mere man. For so high a title was never given by the Holy Spirit to any prophet or apostle. It is evidently above their state and dignity. And yet, perhaps, our argument from it might not be quite conclusive if it were the only sublime title which the Scripture gives him. But when we hear an apostle call him, "GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;" the two characters illustrate each other, and we are taught to consider them both in the highest sense the words will bear. To answer the natural import of the former, the true God must be really *with us*: to correspond with the sense of the latter, the true God must be *incarnate*.

Jesus Christ, according to us, is God and man. He existed, not only before he was born of the virgin, but also before Abraham. He was, in the beginning, with God; he was God, and "was manifest in the flesh," having assumed our nature. "He was justified in the Spirit;" having sent the Holy Ghost, to vindicate his character from every unrighteous charge; to assert the efficacy of his death, and the truth of his resurrection. "Seen of angels;" at his birth, in his agony, and in his triumph. "Preached unto the gentiles;" with great success. "Believed on in the world;" notwithstanding the reproach under which the doctrine of the cross lay. "And received up into glory;" in the presence of a great number of his disciples, where he ever lives to make intercession for his people. And now, what difficulty is there in all this? This is the gospel which we have received from the beginning. According to the Socinians, Jesus Christ is, by nature, a mere man, but is highly exalted for his obedience; so exalted, as to be called GOD. Now, in a mere man, I find but three things; a body, a soul, and the compound resulting from the union of both. I demand, therefore, which of these was manifested in the flesh? Not the *soul*; for it would be absurd to call the soul of Jesus, GOD: and equally so, to talk of its being manifested in the flesh. Besides, we are speaking of a subject that was "received up into glory;" which is affirmed not less of the body, than it is of the soul. Nor is it the *body* of Jesus Christ that was manifested in flesh; for it is ridiculous to say, that flesh is manifested in flesh. Nor was the whole *compound*, or the entire man, manifested in the flesh; for this compound is only the body and soul united.

If the question were about a *quality*, it might be said, That the power, or wisdom, or holiness, or authority of God, was manifested in the flesh. But it is about a *person*; for those words, "received up into glory," can be understood of no other. This person, therefore, must be either human or Divine. Not the *latter*; for, according to our opposers, there is none but the Father. He must, consequently, be the *former*. But a human person is a man: a man, therefore, was manifest in the flesh. But can it be said, without the greatest absurdity, that a man, consisting of a body and soul united, is manifest in flesh? It cannot be denied, if Christ be a mere man, that the same nature was thus manifested which was afterwards received up into glory; for our opponents will not allow that he has two natures. His human nature, consequently, must have been manifested in the flesh; the very thought of which is full of absurdity.

But the tenets of our adversaries not only militate against the mystery of God's manifestation in the flesh; for they destroy *all* the mysteries at once, by removing whatever is difficult in religion. The doctrine of the cross, as represented in the New Testament, has some things in it which are sublime and wonderful, difficult and incomprehensible; things which are contrary to the dictates of depraved reason and our natural prejudices. Hence it is called, by one who was thoroughly acquainted with it, a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, 1 Cor. i. 23. But what is there mysterious and incomprehensible in the cross of Christ, if he be a mere man? Did the Jews never see a man who was acceptable to God, persecuted by the wicked? Did the servants of God never suffer death to

signalize their zeal, or to confirm the truth? If there be any mystery in the cross of Christ, it must be, either because he is a *righteous* man who suffers, or a *prophet*, or *the Son of God*. Not the *first*; for neither Jews nor gentiles can look upon the death of an innocent man, under the power of his persecutors, as a new or a strange thing. Not the *second*; for many prophets had been seen to die for the truth. Nor, according to our adversaries, can it be the *last*; for, if we believe them, he is the Son of God only by a metaphor; or, at most, as Adam was in his first state; having been formed immediately by the power of God, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

Paul speaks of the foolishness of preaching, by which God saves those who believe, 1 Cor. i. 21. The gospel is called *foolishness*, because it contains such things as appear incredible, and really are incomprehensible. But what is there of this kind in the gospel, if the system of our opposers be scriptural? For they remove, or pretend to remove, all the principal difficulties out of the way. Is not this a strong presumption that their gospel and their Christianity are very different from those which Paul preached and professed? Common sense, and a moderate share of impartiality, must surely allow, that there are more difficulties and greater obscurity in those objects which the gospel reveals, than in those presented to us in the works of creation. And yet, if the hypothesis which we oppose be admitted, there are more mysteries in the smallest insect, in a spire of grass, or in a grain of sand, than in all the Christian religion. There were many things under the ancient Jewish economy that were grand, sublime, and mysterious; yet they are not denominated *mysteries* by the Holy Spirit, as those under the gospel

dispensation are. Nor were the objects of the law ever said to be *foolishness*, on account of their being contrary to human prejudices ; and yet, if our opponents be in the right, there were greater mysteries under the law, than any we have under the gospel. God, for instance, appearing in the burning bush, was a greater mystery than “ God manifested in the flesh.”

The hypothesis which we oppose, supersedes the necessity and destroys the nature of *true faith* ; the nature and excellence of which consist, in receiving such truths as lie beyond the powers of reason to discover ; such truths as we could not receive, but upon the testimony of God who reveals them. Faith and sight are different things. By the *latter* we receive such truths as have a natural relation to our notions and light ; by the *former*, such as are contrary to our prejudices, on the bare authority of God in the Scriptures. Whereas this distinction is utterly destroyed, if the gospel reveal no objects, if the Christian religion contain no truths, but such as are level to our capacities, and as agreeable to them as natural truths. But we shall have occasion to resume the consideration of these things hereafter.

CHAPTER III.

THE HYPOTHESIS OF OUR ADVERSARIES DEPRIVES JESUS CHRIST OF HIS HIGHEST HONOUR, BY MAKING HIM POSSESS THOSE TITLES IN A METAPHORICAL SENSE, WHICH THE SCRIPTURE APPLIES TO HIM IN ONE THAT IS PROPER : THIS PROVED BY TWO INSTANCES.

GREATLY diversified and truly sublime are the titles of honour and grace, that are given by the Holy

Spirit to the great Redeemer; but which, on the principles of our adversaries, have little significancy in them. I shall here make choice of two as a specimen: one of which is most strongly adapted to express his personal dignity and essential glory; the other, his grace and work as our Mediator. The titles I mean, are, **THE SON OF GOD**, and **THE SAVIOUR**; both which are frequently applied to him in the Scripture.

Jesus Christ, it is evident, is frequently and emphatically called, “*The Son of God; His own Son; The begotten of the Father; His only begotten Son; and, The Son of the Father in truth and love.*” It must, therefore, be allowed, that God has a Son, who is, in the most emphatical sense, his OWN; who is his Son in a higher sense, than those who are so called in virtue of adoption. It must also be acknowledged, that those who are the children of God by adoption, have a claim to the character of *sons* in a stronger sense, than those who are so called only by a metaphor.

But our opponents invert this order. For, according to them, Christ cannot be called **THE SON OF GOD**, but only by a figure: and, on the other hand, believers are the sons of God by adoption, though they be so only in Jesus Christ. But how can a metaphorical son be more truly a son than adopted sons? And how can adopted sons owe their adoption to a metaphorical son? For, either Christ is himself adopted by the Father, or he is not. If the *former*, how comes it that the Holy Spirit, though he often speaks of the adoption of believers, should never say a word of his adoption? Why is this language unknown to the Bible, “*God has adopted his Son Jesus Christ?*” and so unknown, that it would be looked upon as blasphemous. If the *latter*, he is

only a metaphorical son; for he is not so by nature; our adversaries cannot bear the expression. Nor is he so by adoption; for the language of Scripture does not allow the thought. It follows, therefore, that he is so only by a metaphor; and, consequently, the sonship of believers is of a superior kind to that of Jesus Christ.

The title, "sons of God," which believers bear, has ever been justly esteemed an eminent proof of their interest in the Father's love. It is a glorious and wonderful fruit of Divine grace, and as such they acknowledge it with gratitude and joy. But the character, SON, which Jesus bears, ought never to be considered in that light. For it cannot be said, He is the Son of God, because God *loves* him; but, God loves him because he is *his Son*. The beloved disciple says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1 John iii. 1. But we never hear any of the inspired writers say, "Behold, how God loves Jesus Christ, that he should call him his Son!" The reason is, the exalted character is foreign and accidental to us; but proper and essential to him. In respect of us, it is matter of mere favour; in regard of him, it is his eternal right.

Jesus, the Son of God, is said to be "in the bosom of the Father," and to "sit at the *right hand* of God. Of these two characteristics, the former is more peculiar to the Son of God, as such. It is a mark of superior honour to be seated at the right hand; but of the greatest affection to rest on the bosom. And as it is more natural to love than to honour a son; so, to be "in the bosom of the Father," is a situation more peculiar to the Son of God, as such, than that of sitting at his right hand.

But we shall have occasion, when answering the objections of our opposers, in the concluding section of this work, to consider the Sonship of Jesus Christ more at large. I proceed, therefore, and briefly observe,—

That the character, SAVIOUR, so frequently and so distinguishingly given to Jesus Christ, entirely loses its gracious and glorious import, on the principles of our opponents. For, if he be a mere man, if the whole which he did for us be included in preaching the gospel, in suffering persecution and death, to set us an example of patience, and to confirm the truth which he taught, he has done but little more for us than the apostles and martyrs themselves. On this supposition, it is hard to say what benefit any of the human race, who died before he appeared in the world, could receive from his undertaking. If these were the only, or the principal, benefits we receive from him, we may venture to assert, that Moses was more truly the saviour of the Israelites, than Jesus Christ is of mankind. For Moses *himself* did that which Christ does principally by his *apostles*. The former *delivered* the chosen tribes out of slavery; the latter is only *called* a deliverer, while he leaves us to save ourselves. Moses, indeed, did not suffer death as Christ did; but then, as to a real and proper atonement, or as a price of redemption, the death of Jesus is as unprofitable to us as the death of that ancient lawgiver would have been to the posterity of Jacob. But this particular must be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCORDING TO THE SENTIMENTS OF OUR ADVERSARIES, THE DEATH OF CHRIST HAS NO REAL USEFULNESS IN IT.

THOSE who are acquainted with the gospel of Divine grace cannot but know, that the death of Christ is not only useful, but absolutely necessary to our salvation. His vicarious obedience and atoning death are the grand subjects of the ministry of reconciliation: hence the determination of Paul, "to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2; and to glory only in the cross of his crucified Lord, Eph. vi. 14.

This interesting truth was clearly taught by the ancient prophets. Witness that famous oracle in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which contains so many illustrious characteristics of the Messiah, depending upon his death; and that animated description of his sufferings and sorrows in the twenty-second Psalm. John the Baptist no sooner sees Jesus, than he points him out as an atoning sacrifice. "Behold," says that venerated teacher, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29. Christ himself, when discoursing familiarly with his disciples, frequently foretells his own death. And when one of his apostles endeavours to dissuade him from going up to Jerusalem there to suffer, he sharply rebukes him for it; of such importance was it, in his esteem, to the salvation of man and the glory of God. And when he was expiring on the cross, he cried, with his last breath, "IT IS FINISHED," John xix. 30; plainly implying, that his death is of the last importance; that his death comprehends every thing.

The propitiatory death of our great High Priest

was foretold in the earliest promises, and prefigured in the ancient types. The dying Jesus was represented by the paschal lamb, which was sacrificed in Egypt, instead of the first-born of the Israelites; the blood of which, being sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses, secured them from the sword of the destroying angel. For, as the paschal lamb ransomed the first-born, being sacrificed for them, so Jesus delivers believers from the sword of Divine justice, by dying in their stead. It is necessary, however, to be observed, that as those things which were but imperfectly represented under the law, are fully accomplished under the gospel, there is this difference between the type and the antitype: the former, though not an equivalent for the life of a man, was accepted of God; because the design then was, not to *make* satisfaction to God's justice, but only to *prefigure* that sacrifice which was to make a full satisfaction. But Christ is a worthy ransom; a substitute, whom we need not fear being rejected as inferior to those for whom he dies. He is, therefore, called "The Lamb of God." He is **THE LAMB**, by way of excellence; the only lamb that can atone for our sins, and ransom our souls. Such is the import of the phrase, according to the style of inspiration; in which it is common to add the Divine name to anything that is peculiarly excellent, great, or remarkable. As, for instance, "The mountains of God; the cedars of God; the garden of God;" and here, "The Lamb of God." Our dying Surety was represented by the scape goat, on the great day of expiation. To fulfil this type, therefore, he must bear our sins; he must be anathema; he must be made a curse for us. For if not, why was he represented by this goat? What was there, in any other view, common between them? I

might, on this occasion, multiply particulars out of the Jewish ritual, but these may suffice.

That the application we make of these ancient types is not fanciful and forced, the sacred penmen of the New Testament abundantly show. They unite in assuring us, that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; that he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; that he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree; that he was made sin for us; that he was made a curse for us; that he gave his life a ransom for many; that he was delivered for our offences; that he hath reconciled and redeemed us to God by his blood; that his blood purges the conscience from dead works, and cleanseth from all sin.* These declarations are perfectly conformable to the language of prophecy, in which it is said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; He shall make his soul an offering for sin; The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself; For the transgression of my people was he stricken; He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5, 6, 8, 10; Dan. ix. 26. What, now, can we infer from these, and a multitude of similar passages in the book of God, but that the death of Christ was *vicarious*; that he died, not only for *our good*, but in *our stead*; and that his death has procured for us, not some trifling benefit only, but remission of sins and eternal life; being a full satisfaction to the demands of a violated law, and the claims of eternal justice?

* 1 Cor. v. 7; John i. 29; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; Matt. xx. 28; Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. v. 18; Rev. v. 9; Heb. ix. 14; 1 John i. 7.

But, notwithstanding all this, if Jesus be a mere creature, the doctrine of the satisfaction cannot be defended. Of this the Socinians are aware, and therefore they renounce it ; even though it is an article in the Christian faith of the greatest importance ; an article, so often repeated, so variously and so emphatically expressed in Scripture, that we might, with equal reason, renounce revelation itself, as call it in question. But let us now inquire, what advantage we have by the death of Christ, according to our opponents.

They tell us, that “the blood of Christ confirms the new covenant, which God makes with mankind through him.”—But if his death serve only to confirm the covenant, in their sense of the expressions, there is little reason to consider it as the principal object of our believing regards. For of all the events relating to Jesus Christ, this is the least adapted to confirm the covenant. If we consider him as dying in our stead, and as sustaining the punishment deserved by our sins, there can be no doubt but his death assures us of the love of God, and ratifies his covenant of grace : but, on their hypothesis, it is not fitted to answer any such design ; his life, at least, is much better adapted to that purpose. For those multiplied and shining miracles which he wrought, encourage our faith in him, much more than the sorrows and pangs of his death.

“But though his miracles are better calculated to assure us of his power, yet his death is the greatest evidence of his love, and best fitted to persuade us of it.”—To persuade us of his love ! But how should an unprofitable death be so well adapted to persuade us of his love ? Was it ever known that a wise man laid down his life for no other end, but to convince another how much he loved him ? Besides, on the

principles of our adversaries, the death of Christ is more beneficial to himself than it is to us, as we have before proved.

But in what respect does the death of Jesus confirm the covenant? Is it on the part of *man*, or on the part of *God*? Not the *former*, I presume; it must, therefore, be the *latter*; but then it is on our principles, not on theirs. That is, the death of Christ gives us the highest assurance that God will perform his gracious promises to the utmost. This we allow; in this we rejoice, as a most comfortable and certain truth; because we consider the death of the incarnate Son, as the greatest possible evidence of the Father's love to our souls. Hence we conclude, that as God has done us this wonderful kindness, he will do us every other that he has promised; this being such a favour, as is greater than any, greater than all the rest. If it were not so, it would by no means follow, that because he has delivered up Jesus to death, he will give us eternal life. For though it is highly probable, that he who does a greater kindness will do a less; yet it is far from being certain, that he who does a less will also do a greater. If Jesus be a mere man, and if his death be not a satisfaction to Divine justice; his life cannot be so valuable as the eternal happiness of those he redeems: and, consequently, the gift of the former cannot assure us that we shall have the latter.

“The death of Christ is also of use to confirm his doctrine.”—Suppose it be, yet it cannot be the *grand* use of it; because the Scriptures never mention it as such, where the benefits resulting from it are enumerated. Besides, if this were its principal use, it would be of much less advantage to us than his life; the latter being abundantly better adapted to confirm

his doctrine. His life is all glorious with great, beneficent, astonishing works, which prove that the doctrine he teaches is truly Divine; because Heaven, by a thousand miraculous facts, gives him an unsuspected testimony. But though his death plainly shows, that he *sincerely believes* his doctrine to be Divine; yet, separately considered, it does not prove that it *is so* in reality. Nor is he the only person who confirmed the truths which he taught by suffering a violent death. In this respect there was nothing in his death but what was common to prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Again: to whom should the death of Christ confirm the truth of his doctrine? To his enemies, or his friends? Not his *enemies*; for the greatest and most dreadful part of his sufferings was unobserved by them. They neither beheld his bloody agony in the garden, nor knew the cause of his bitter cry on the cross. And as to those sufferings which did come under their notice, they looked upon them as the just reward of his supposed blasphemy. Not his *friends*; for his death was considered by them in a very different point of light. So far from confirming, it rather staggered their faith in his doctrine; and they cried out, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," Luke xxiv. 21. Nay, were we to consider the death of Christ, without any reference to an atonement for sin, to his preceding miracles, and subsequent resurrection, it would be so far from confirming his doctrine, that it would prove the strongest confutation of it that malice itself could desire.

But what doctrine is the death of Christ supposed to confirm? Is it that of *forgiveness* with God? that our offended Sovereign will *pardon sinners*? Far, very far from it, on the principles of our opposers.

For by what mode of argumentation shall we infer, that because a *perfectly innocent* and *righteous* person was treated with such severity, by the eternal God, that he will exercise his pardoning mercy on *criminals*, who deserve to perish? The natural, the unavoidable inference, is of a contrary kind. For, if such things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Luke xxiii. 31. If judgment began with the holy Jesus, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear? If God spared not his own Son, how much less will he spare his enemies! How should thinking men believe Jesus, when he tells them that God will pity and pardon sinners, while they behold their Maker treating the holy Teacher himself with such alarming severity? The death of Christ, therefore, detached from a consideration of its being satisfactory to the claims of Divine justice, or an atonement for sin, is so far from being a source of hope to the guilty, that it is calculated to raise in their breasts the most awful apprehensions, and to sink them in utter despair.

“In the death of Christ we have an admirable example of patience.”—Granted; but then it is on our principles, not on those of our opponents. He has given such an example of patience as never had, nor ever will have its equal; for he not only endured the fierce torments of crucifixion, but sustained, which was infinitely more dreadful, the wrath of God. “He was made sin; he was made a curse for us,” 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13. Appearing as our substitute, the sword of eternal justice awoke against him, and he was deprived, for a season, of his Father’s presence; a privation the more sensibly felt, because his love to the Father was fervent, constant, perfect. Yes, Jesus, the adorable Jesus, underwent those pains

and sorrows, those agonies and horrors, which are included in the penal sanction of the law, and which the justice of God inflicts, when satisfaction for sin is required. Who, then, who can forbear to wonder at his patience and fortitude?

But the doctrine of our opponents, gives us a very different view of our suffering Lord. For if he suffered only according to their sense, there have been much greater examples of patience and fortitude in multitudes of martyrs. Many of those faithful witnesses suffered for a much longer time, and under a greater variety of severer torments; and yet, instead of being overwhelmed with sorrow, were transported with joy. This is a certain fact, but quite astonishing and perfectly unaccountable, on the hypothesis which we oppose. It shocks reason, and staggers faith; it nonplusses imagination, and glares on the mind as an impious absurdity. What! shall He who is perfect, shall the Lion of the tribe of Judah, be terrified at the approach of death; a death in which he suffers no sensations of Divine vengeance, nor any bitterness of the Divine curse denounced against sin; while his servants, who have all their strength and consolation from him, triumph in the midst of torments! What! shall He be seized with agonizing sorrows, while they are transported with joy! What! shall he sweat blood at the approach of death, while they behold a Divine hand wiping off their blood and sweat, for as to tears they do not shed one! He complains that God has forsaken him, while they rejoice that everlasting arms embrace and support them! What could be the reason of this astonishing difference? It must have been, either on the part of *God*, or on that of *second causes*, or on that of the *suffering person*. It was not on the part of *second causes*, for