

# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF  
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXX.] SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all. COL. III. 11.

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## QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 1824.

*What is it to eat and drink unworthily, at the table of the Lord, as is expressed in 1 Cor. xi. 29.?*

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## SOLUTION.

I ENTER upon an elucidation of this subject with the pleasurable hope of removing, through the divine blessing, the fears and scruples of many of the weaklings of Christ's flock, who hesitate to approach the Lord's table under a sense of their *unworthiness*, lest they should eat and drink *damnation to themselves!* By which they are prevented from external communion with the family of God, in the celebration of the death and sufferings of Christ, by a participation of that delightful ordinance which he has instituted in remembrance of his love to his church, and his eternal triumph over all her enemies. Every thing that can possibly be done by God's ministers to "comfort the feeble-minded," and confirm them in the faith, will have, I am persuaded, the divine approbation and blessing of Jehovah, who hath strictly enjoined upon them, that indispensable and solemn service, by this especial command, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God," speak ye *comfortably* unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her that

her warfare is *accomplished*, that her *iniquities* are pardoned!

It is my ardent wish and aim, as well as my daily prayer to the Lord, that my public labors in his vineyard, unworthy as I am, may have this glorious tendency, that you may be comforted with the comfort wherewith I myself am comforted of God, in all my tribulations—for “if we be afflicted, saith the apostle, it is for your sakes.” That is, that in our afflictions we may witness the sufficiency of grace, to support us, and in our deliverance bear testimony to the Almighty power and *never failing* love of the Lord Jesus Christ. That we may unhesitatingly proclaim his faithfulness to perform that great promise, “I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU, NOR FORSAKE YOU.” That the good work which he himself *began* in you, shall be carried on and completed, in opposition to all that men and devils can possibly do to prevent it—in glorious triumph over all the sin and unbelief of your own evil hearts: “for if we believe not he abideth faithful he cannot deny himself.” With a view, then, to your comfort and establishment in the truth as it is in Jesus, and your encouragement to come to the Lord’s Supper: I proceed,

1. To prove that it is a standing ordinance in the church to the end of time. Some professors of Christianity have renounced all ordinances, as “*weak and beggarly elements*,” and because saved by divine grace, have neglected to assemble themselves together for the public worship of God. “We can,” say they, “go to heaven without the performance of such services—we are justified entirely by grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.” How ungrateful and highly rebellious is such language, and such slothful negligence of the express will of our God! They may think of doing the more honor to divine grace by such assertions: but be it known unto them, that though we are saved entirely by free and sovereign grace that is in Christ Jesus (which we rejoice in as much as they possibly can) that grace has its sin-subduing, and divinely quickening *influence*, in the hearts of *regenerated* sinners. The prayer that grace dictates is “draw me; and we will run after thee;” (S. Song i. 4.) And the humble sinner thus breathes out the desire of his new and hidden man, “I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.” (Psm. cxix. 32.) For with him the service of the Lord is not sla-

very but *perfect freedom*: "he finds the ways of wisdom ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace." Then let the following scriptural evidences of the authenticity and continuation of the ordinance of the supper in the gospel church have your especial consideration.

1. That gospel ordinances are distinct from all the legal ordinances of the Jewish church; and though the latter succeeded the former, in point of time, they were not substituted in their stead, but are *new* and totally unconnected with them: being ordinances of an entirely *new* and more glorious dispensation.—The dispensation of "THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD." When the apostle rebuked the *Galatians* for turning "again to *weak and beggarly* elements;" it was for the superstitious observance "of *days, months, and times, and years*" into which they had been led by their Judaising teachers, who seduced them from the simplicity of Christ; preaching "*another gospel*," by which they mixt works and grace in *their* scheme of salvation, and placed an undue dependance on their observance of *holy days*, adhering to the *ceremonial* law, contrary to the gospel and its ordinances, as instituted by Christ himself. But though he rebukes them, as he did also the *Corinthians*, for being *subject* to ordinances, which were subversive of the gospel, the same apostle saith to the *Corinthians* afterwards, "*now, I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and KEEP THE ORDINANCES as I delivered them unto you.*" (1 Cor. xi. 1.) Paul delivered unto them ordinances, doubtless by the Divine direction, and we know that one of them was the ordinance in question, by his own very expressive description, not only of the ordinance itself, but also of its sublime signification: "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread!" Which proves that it was the practice of the church in the apostolic age, when the gospel shone in all its pristine excellencies, and that it was attached alone to the gospel dispensation, in distinction from all Jewish rites, ceremonies, and observances, which were abrogated and done away in Christ.

2. It was not only the practice of Paul, and the churches among the Gentiles over which he more immediately pre-

sided, but of the disciples, and the *first* gospel church, which “continued stedfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers.” (Acts ii. 42.) And this they did not do prostrate at some hallowed shrine, or before some elegantly painted altar, but “*breaking bread from house to house*, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart: praising God, and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (ver. 46.)

3. That the disciples followed the *example* of their Lord and acted in strict conformity to his divine *command*, “*do this in remembrance of me.*” And consequently, could not have *erred* in the introduction of this ordinance into the church of God: knowing well that it was Christ’s own *institution*, who a little before his crucifixion, “took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke xxii. 19.) Thus, it is evidently a New Testament ordinance, administered, and commanded by Christ himself; and in obedience to him administered regularly by his disciples to the church.

4. And not more evident from the scriptures is its *institution* than its *continuation*: that it was the will of Christ it should be perpetuated in his church, is plain from his command, do it in *remembrance* of me; which implies his bodily absence; for they needed not such *remembrancer* when he was present: and that the church in all ages, to the end of time, is thus to commemorate his death and sufferings is equally as indisputable, from the charge he gave to the disciples after his resurrection—“teaching them to observe ALL THINGS *whatsoever* I have commanded you.” These are the very words of Christ himself: and he adds, “lo! I am with you always, even unto the *end of the world*,” which proves that the charge is not confined to the first disciples; but extends to the whole church, and that, to the end of the world, that they may “*shew the Lord’s death till he come.*”

5. The grand and important end of this ordinance, is to exhibit to a believer the broken body and freely flowing blood of Christ! In which he beholds the inflexibility of justice, which drew its sword and smote the man, God’s

fellow! Rather than justice should be injured in our salvation, the Son of God must suffer! whose immense love led him through the floods of divine wrath, to bear the *penalty* due to our sins, that we might go *free*: justice has taken at the hands of our loving, bleeding Surety, the whole debt that we had contracted, to the very last mite! And shall that debt be demanded a *second* time? Shall the *penalty* be inflicted upon the church which her dear bleeding Lord endured in her stead? Justice, that so sternly demanded the debt of our Surety, as sternly answers, no, I am *satisfied*, and forbid such a flagrant act of injustice! Rejoice then, ye highly favored souls, who surround the table of your Lord, that the once suffering Jesus, is risen and pleads the merits of his blood in your behalf before the throne of his Father! washed in that blood, you may, and that too in your own behalf, exultingly put the question of the apostle to all your enemies, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

And what a display of love, mercy, pity, compassion and determination to save his church from her sins! the people who are brought to the table by faith rejoice that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed! They see through the figures of the bread and wine, the life and salvation of their souls by the sacrifice of the man of sorrows! That, as the life of the body is sustained by animal food, so exemption from death spiritual and eternal, is through the satisfactory, and complete atonement of the slaughtered Lamb of God; in, and through whom spiritual and eternal life, like a river with broad streams, freely flow down into their immortal souls!

6. Suffer me, before I dismiss this part of the subject, to offer a few remarks on the *mode* of administering and of participating of the elements. Too much simplicity and humility cannot be observed by the administrator; and with respect to his office in the church, of which he is of course a member, it seems to me immaterial; as I cannot see why the office of administering it, should be confined to a *minister* or a *deacon*. Why not any common member, provided he has gifts sufficient to make proper remarks, and is a man full of faith, and zealous for the glory of Christ. Yet, perhaps, the minister is generally the most proper person being endowed with superior gifts, and in the constant habit of speaking on theological subjects.—

But I make this remark in opposition to popery and priestcraft. The common people in the church of Rome, expect that the *priest* has transubstantiated the elements, and that they are the very body and blood of Christ; and when each one receives the *consecrated wafer*, the very body of Christ that hung on Calvary, is received and eaten! and although Protestants are better taught; yet through kneeling to the elements, and receiving them immediately from the hands of the minister, they may be led to think more of that man than they ought to think; and lamentably diverge from its simplicity, toward that superstition, to which the benighted mind of man is so naturally prone. Let the elements be handed round by eligible persons, and let minister and people set upon a level at the table of their Lord, as brethren, knowing that one is their master, even Christ.

The participation of the elements should be attended with equal simplicity and humility. Brotherly love, and unity of soul, must take the lead, or the ordinance is misunderstood and awfully carnalized. Under the influence of love to Christ, and to one another for his sake, let them sit familiarly round the hospitable board of their Lord and Master, and not *kneel* at the feet of the *priest*, and seemingly bow to the bread and wine, as if they were really transubstantiated; or at least, rendered something more than before they were brought to the table. *Sitting* is the proper position consistently with the very nature and design of the ordinance; which implies rest in Christ, and sweet familiarity with him as his brethren, for whom he gave himself a ransom! Besides, sitting together shows that equality and familiarity with each other, which is becoming those who attend together at that "feast which was made for *laughter*:" and it certainly heightens our individual joy to see each other happily partake of the rich provisions so liberally provided by our most bountiful Lord.

*Second.* Who eateth and drinketh unworthily—

1. Not the *sinner* who truly sensible of his unworthiness, most humbly acknowledges it before God, while he pleads the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer as the ground for exemption from eternal destruction. He is indeed the only character invited and welcomed to the gospel feast. For it is a feast of divine pardon; atonement for sin; redemption from the curse and penalty of the law;

refuge for the guilty; and bread for the hungry and starving poor! rest for the weary, strength for him who hath no might, healing for the wounded, help for the helpless, health for the sickly, wisdom for the ignorant, and righteousness for the unrighteous! these are to the sinner who is ready to perish as fat things full of marrow; they are applicable to his extensive necessities; suitable to his wretched condition; and become, when divine grace brings him home, the delight of his heart and the triumphant subjects of his most joyful songs.—Hear the language of the Lord in the Old Testament concerning unworthy sinners: (Isa. xxvii. 13.) “they shall come that are *ready* to perish!”—they *shall* come: the Great Shepherd shall take them on the Omnipotent shoulders of his love, and bring them home—“in the land of Assyria and the **OUTCASTS** in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” **OUTCASTS**, *vagrants*, and those who are *ready to perish*, are heartily welcome to the table, the house, and the heart of our wonderful Redeemer! This “wine is given unto him who is of a heavy heart, and strong drink to him who is ready to perish!” Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved! saith the kind master of the feast: partake plentifully of my free grace, and eternal love unfurled on Calvary by my blood, and wounds, and smart.—Come without money, without merit, all *unworthy* as you are—partake of my bounties—sing of redeeming love, and to magnify my name for ever!

“The vile, the lost, he calls to them,  
Ye trembling souls appear;  
The righteous in their own esteem,  
Have no acceptance here.”

Grace is infinitely free for the *sensibly* unworthy; it is *most free* I can and do assure you, though you seem, poor sinner unwilling to believe it—you are ready to consider it news too good, too precious, to be true; and are saying, Can the Lord receive such a sinner as I am? yes, he does, he receives no other! O may he help you to sing with *Cowper*, whom I just now quoted.

“If guilt and sin afford a plea,  
And may obtain a place;  
Surely the Lord will welcome me,  
And I shall see his face.”

2. Those who eat and drink unworthily are, first, *insen-*

sible of their unworthiness, and make a very *merit* even of their coming to the table: they suppose that they have thereby performed a *duty*, and done God service: for, *second*, they “discern not the Lord’s body.” They have no eyes to behold the Lamb in his dolorous sufferings, nor feel the need of his sin-removing blood. They are “the whole who need no physician.” *Third*, they have not on the wedding garment of the righteousness of Christ, which is the righteousness of the saints: and consequently, will be found speechless, and perish with those who are going about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. O! what a mercy it is to be brought to a *discernment* of the Lord’s body on the tree, and to venture wholly on the sacrifice of Christ for life and salvation! O precious faith! Lord increase it, and help us to cease from our own works entirely, and enter into perpetual rest in the Lord Jesus Christ!

*Third*. The damnation which they bring upon themselves.

1. The word *κρίμα*, rendered damnation, also signifies punishment, and *judgment*. Hence, we may take notice of the shameful conduct of some of the Christians at Corinth, who feasted and took so much wine at the ordinance, as to be guilty of inebriety: on which account, the apostle says, (ver. 22.) What! have ye not houses to eat, and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? They ate and drank *ἀναξίως*, *shamefully*, unworthily, without the least reverence for the church, or discernment of the Lord’s body; and by their intemperance brought upon themselves corporeal punishment by sickness and disease; the usual fruits of disgraceful inebriety!

2. But those who now, in the sense first shewn, eat and drink unworthily, will in the end bring upon themselves everlasting destruction. For to the proud pharisees of old, Jesus said—and it stands upon record as an address to the self-righteous to the end of time—“ye serpents! ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell!”

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

*Who is the just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and the wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness?* ECCLES. vii. 15.



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AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF  
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXXI.] SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πανὶ Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all. COL. III. 11.

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## QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 1824.

*Who is the just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and the wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness? ECCLES. VII. 15.*

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## SOLUTION.

IN almost every part of God's word we are taught the discrimination of free grace, in the salvation of the elect, and are led to "discern between the wicked and the righteous; between him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not." The *former* are generally the poor of this world, who, though rich in faith, and heirs of an everlasting kingdom, have frequently trial upon trial; disappointments and bereavements in such a perpetual succession, as to render them in the eyes of the world, of all men the most miserable. And indeed, so they would be, if they had hope only in this life: but, O unbounded consolation! The world, with its toys, trifles, and empty bubbles, which will soon burst and disappear, is not their *rest*. They seek another, and an infinitely superior world. Their precious faith and hope penetrate the gloomy cloud of their earthly disconsolations, and look, with "glory in their tribula-

tions," beyond them all, to the ever-cloudless atmosphere of eternal day, where their sun will never set; where uninterrupted and untold felicities will everlastingly abound!

The *latter* have their portion in this life; and amidst all their iniquities and practical wickedness have worldly success and prosperity. So conspicuously do they prosper, as to render them objects of envy, even with the people of God, when they lose sight of their own everlasting portion. David confesses this to have been the case with him. "*I was envious, (saith he) at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*" (Psalm lxxiii. 3.) But he is led of the Spirit into the divine sanctuary, and then he sees the folly of his envy. "*I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.*" There he was able to take a proper view, and make a just estimate of their prosperity: and this is the aggregate; "*Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction!*" Their prosperity is like the "crackling of thorns under a pot;" it glitters for a few minutes, and is succeeded by eternal darkness! as WATTS has awfully expressed it;

" Like grass they flourish, till thy breath  
Blasts them in everlasting death!"

What Christian then in his right mind would envy them, or wish to make an exchange of circumstances with them? They are rather objects of pity than of envy. True, they have seemingly a pleasant and agreeable portion in this life: but poor wretched creatures, it is all they will have. "*The good things of this life*" will soon terminate, in their "*lifting up their eyes in hell, being in torments.*" But, O ye highly favored followers of the Lamb! your tribulations, poverty, pain, sorrow, and vexations, will soon be exchanged for an everlasting kingdom of glory and immortality!

" In vain they boast their little stores,  
Trifles are theirs, a kingdom yours!"

With this soul-encouraging view of the *righteous*, and awful view of the *wicked*, we will proceed to answer the question which is occasioned by a very critical passage of God's word.

*Who is the just man that perisheth in his righteousness?*

It cannot intend that a just man, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, can possibly perish everlastingly! The idea is insufferable! The very thought, could I indulge it, would harrow up my soul with intolerable horror! It would at once exterminate the good hope of salvation, and cut off all expectation of being for ever with the Lord, for if one soul may fall away from grace and perish, all the people of God are alike exposed to eternal destruction! The idea cannot, must not, shall not be admitted. God's word universally and imperiously forbids it. "Remember, I pray, whoever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" (Job iv. 7.) **THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH**, is that invaluable all decisive and most satisfactory sentence, pronounced by the lips of eternal truth, on which my soul lives, and on which I dare to die! "If I am found in Jesus' hands, my soul can ne'er be lost."

But the words strongly express

1. The man who is *superstitiously* righteous, and therefore *just* in his own estimation; as described in the the 16th verse of the same chapter: "Be not righteous over-much neither make thyself overwise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? The very bodies of many religionists have been destroyed by superstition: in the church of Rome, that mother of harlots and abominations! *penance, fastings, pilgrimages*, and other ways of afflicting the body to atone for the sins of the soul, have been the superstitious channels through which destruction has been gradually brought upon her ignorant and miserable devotees! Thus have the just in their own esteem, *perished* in *their own* righteousness!

2. There is a *just* man who perishes in his righteousness by attempting to justify himself by the deeds of the law, the duties of his own hands, and the establishment of his own goodness. For, "going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not, saith Paul, submitted themselves to the righteousness of God: for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." And that no man is justified by the deeds of the law is evident, for "*The just shall live by faith.*" (Rom. x. 3, 4. Gal. iii. 11.) The solemn consequence, then, is unavoidable, that all who live and die, trusting in themselves, that they are righteous, and despising others who

trust alone in the righteousness of Christ, though they may seem to live holy as angels in the eyes of men, will inevitably *perish* in their *boasted* righteousness, which is but as filthy *rags*! “For there is none other name, (but the name of Jesus) given under heaven, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.)

3. The child of God who is *just* and holy in Christ his head, though he cannot eternally, may *corporeally* and *temporarily* perish; and that too in his righteousness, or on account of it. “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.” (Isaiah lvii 1.) He may perish in his reputation, through foul calumny and diabolical defamation. For, saith the precious Jesus, “Ye shall be hated of all men for my name sake.” All sorts of men shall hate you, “for ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Professor and profane, but more especially the former, will persecute those who dwell alone on the rock, and are not numbered among the people. That *little flock* to which it is our Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom, cannot take possession of it only through *much tribulation*!

The truly righteous man may also perish in his circumstances, through the afflictive providences of his covenant God, who wisely takes away that which would have otherwise proved an hindrance and loss to his highly indulged child. Or by cruel and raging persecution so as to be divested of his property, his liberty, or even of life itself!—As many have suffered at a stake for the name sake of Christ, rather than give up that truth, which he had rendered so dear, or desert that cause which was more precious to them than life, or thousands of human lives!

4. But we will come now to that which I consider the primary intention of the Holy Spirit in the precious words, **THE JUST MAN!** the eminently *just man*, the *man* without sin, and yet who *perisheth*, who is **CUT OFF**, in his righteousness, and that for our sakes; the man Christ Jesus!—“**THE JUST ONE,**” (Acts vii. 52.) “Jesus Christ, **THE RIGHTEOUS**” (1 John ii 1.) “He is **JUST** and having salvation, (Zech. ix. 9.) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the **JUST** for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God.” (1 Pet. iii. 18.) He indeed perisheth in his righteousness, uprightness, and integrity of heart. In him was no guile, no sin; not the shadow of a blemish; yet he was

cut off! But how could justice then take his life? The answer is given by *Daniel* and by *Isaiah*; "The MESSIAH shall be cut off, *but not for himself.*" (*Daniel ix. 26.*) "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" (as for sins of his own.) But 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! Our sins were found in his account by imputation, and justly charged upon him. His engagement in the ancient covenant must not be violated; and that rendered his death, at the appointed time, absolutely and indispensably necessary! Justice is magnified in demanding of him a perfect satisfaction for the abominable offences of his people! And that satisfaction is given—He is cut off in his righteousness, in his active and passive righteousness, that we might be cleansed from all iniquity, and be made the righteousness of God in him!

Let those professors who despise the riches of his grace, by a denial of this complete atonement, tremble for themselves! Let them read this short but scriptural account of the satisfaction given by the crucified Jesus to justice, in his people's behalf, and refute it if they can! With such clear, decisive, and unsophisticated language, as that of *Isaiah* and *Daniel* on the subject, no man can deny the doctrine of the atonement, if he will give himself time to think, without feeling in his natural conscience, that he is thereby denying the word of the Lord. However, such is the natural enmity of man's heart to God and his truth, and such his predilection for his own righteousness, that we have no occasion to wonder that the greater part of those, who would be thought spiritual builders, reject the foundation and chief corner-stone, setting it at nought, as a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence! Blessed indeed is the man whose eyes are opened to behold Christ the *just* one, suffering for him the *unjust*! By whom the atonement in all its glories is embraced, and whose life in the flesh, is a life of faith on the Son of God, who hath loved him and given himself a ransom for his soul!

II. *Who the wicked man, that prolongeth his life in his wickedness?* The difficulty of this part of our subject, is the prolongation of his life in his wickedness. For it is gene-

rally allowed, as it has been universally and awfully attested, that a course of practical wickedness is a short course of life, which is wretchedly abbreviated by the dire effects of vice: corporeal debility, infirmity, and disease, the melancholy harbingers of death! The prolongation of the life of such a person seems almost impossible; and is really an embarrassment to us in the prosecution of the subject, which cannot be removed till we discover by the Sacred volume, who the *wicked man* is, and that he is of a singular description, particularized from the outwardly profane.

1. *By religious hypocrisy.* The immoralities which have hurried thousands of the human species to the grave, are most carefully avoided by him; he pursues a different course: he puts on "the form of godliness" and *creeps* into the church to answer some sinister purpose, (Jude 4.) and to obtain such pecuniary advantages, as shall *advance him in life!* "His God is his belly, he minds earthly things." And if it should be more to his advantage, like Demas, he would desert all his religious connections, and return again into the carnal world, characteristically confirming the truth of the proverb, quoted by Peter, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. (2 Pet. ii. 22.) But in a religious nation like our own, he will find it, no doubt, more to his advantage to keep up "a fair shew in the flesh," by continuing his profession of Christianity, and with a religious grimace, make godliness his gain! Any minister, any creed, any sentiments will do, provided they are productive of worldly immunities. Such a man will, very frequently make long prayers to be heard of men, and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets; that is openly; to be seen of men, verily, saith the Blessed Jesus, "I say unto you, they have their reward."

2. *We shall find this wicked man, if we duly attend to the word of God, in the character and garb of a carnal PRIEST:* and who answers to the following biblical description of *priests* and *priestcraft*: First. They *run*, but I sent them not saith the Lord, they were never called of grace to know the Lord, and the mysteries of his love, but are sent, and qualified of men, to fill up *lucrative situations*, and feed upon the very vitals of the people. Against whom, God has denounced a woe in his holy word. "Woe be to the

shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock." Eze. xxxiv. 2, 3. *Second.* They preach (if preaching it may be called) the flesh pleasing doctrines of free-will, creature-sanctification, and self-procured salvation. Indeed some of them read over, for a few minutes, a little dry morality, and having performed their disagreeable task, return to their worldly amusements! Such wear the "rough garment to deceive," the garment of detestable priestcraft, and are the enemies of the cross of Christ. *Third.* They are denominated by the Lord himself *blind, ignorant, and dumb.* "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." (Isaiah lvi. 10) *Blind* to their awful state, and to the truth and way of salvation; for "the God of this world hath blinded their eyes." *Ignorant* of the scriptures they profess to explain, and of the awful judgments that await such characters at the day of their bodily dissolution! *Dumb*, for they have no tongue to pray, praise, and proclaim the blessings of divine grace, of which they are totally ignorant! And withal they are called *dogs*;" for *without* are dogs." Rev. xxii. 15. They are not *within* the spiritual church of Christ, but are of antichrist; "of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." (Rev. iii. 9.) against whom the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Paul, has most graciously cautioned us: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision! *Fourth.* They are further, by Jehovah himself, marked for their *greediness*: The Lord saith, after the description quoted above "Yea, they are *greedy dogs* which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that can never understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter, "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine; and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant." (Isaiah lvi. 11, 12.) *Fifth.* Another description of *priests* (though of the same family) are in appearance, profession, and pretensions, widely different from those already described. In *appearance* like whited sepulchres, *beautiful* without in the eyes of men; in profession min-

isters of the gospel, and in *pretensions* possessed of free-will and power to sanctify or to promote the sanctification of their flesh! They are *holy men* in the estimation of *their* people; whose minds they strongly prejudice against the true ministers of Christ, and the infinitely free and eternal grace of God; by which a sinner is saved without the deeds of the law: these too look every one for his gain, and are not unsuccessful in obtaining handsome salaries! This is a true, because a scriptural delineation of the *priests* of the *outward* church of all denominations. But the Lord has a church within a church; to which his gospel is preached, and by whom he is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Having glanced at the ministers of the *outward* court, it will not be improper to give a short description of a true minister of Jesus Christ: and *First*, he is a truly sensible and humble sinner who loathes himself and confesses that "in him (that is in his flesh) dwelleth no good thing." He is born from above, and can feelingly and experimentally describe the *new-birth*. He knows the power of Christ to save; the virtue of his blood to cleanse, and the glory of his righteousness to justify the ungodly. He is made free from the law of sin and death, by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is written upon his heart! *Second*. He is qualified and sent of the Lord himself into the ministry; for saith Paul "How shall they preach except they be sent," (Rom. x. 15.) They receive their commission and authority immediately from God: which is evidenced in their hearts and consciences by the Holy Spirit. God has given him good natural understanding and ability to clothe his ideas in language above contempt.

(To be Continued.)

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QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

*Who is intended by the poor man in Eccl. ix. 14?*

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# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

## EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXXII.] SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 1824.

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Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all. COL. III. 11.

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### QUESTION.

(Continued from the last Number.)

*Who is the just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and the wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness?* ECCLES. VII. 15.

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### SOLUTION.

HE has an aptitude to teach: and above all, a real love for immortal souls; attended with that warmth of zeal for the glory of the Lord Jesus, which will lead him, lost in the charms of his bleeding Master, to forget himself and his own personal interest, as a man, and to declare faithfully without any equivocation, or mental reservation, the whole council of God, so far as he has been taught it, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. He will valiantly stem the torrent of error, with an eye to the glory of God, and the exaltation of free-grace alone. He calls no man master upon the earth; for *one*, and but one, is his master, even Jesus Christ. *Second*, He is made an able minister of the New Testament, or new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. Preaching not only what are denominated the high doctrines of the gospel, but preaching them experimentally as he has re-

ceived them with power and sweetness in his own soul. He is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, discerning between things that differ, and separating between the precious and the vile. Such a man, saith the Lord, shall be as my mouth. He distinguishes in his ministry between law and gospel, works and grace, flesh and spirit, and the Lord blesses him as an under shepherd, with food for the *lambs* as well as the sheep. He is a watchman on the walls of Sion, a steward of the manifold grace of God : and a *witness*, an *eye* and *ear* witness, for Christ, and cannot but speak the things which he has seen and heard ; for the testimony of God is confirmed in him.

“ We have, saith the apostle, this *treasure* in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” The inestimable treasure of a knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins ; and then “ the good man, out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, the things of the Spirit ; the deep things of God ; testifying the gospel of the grace of God.” (1 Cor. iv. 7. Matt. xii. 35. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Acts xx. 24.) He preaches *conscientiously* the truth which God has endeared to his own soul, and of which he has the *internal* witness of the Holy Spirit that always sweetly harmonizes with the scriptures of truth. Hence the bold asseveration of Paul, “ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. ix. 1. He does not advance with hesitations, and doubts of the reality of that which he delivers to his auditory. He does not with a kind of mock humility state it merely as his *opinion*—or the opinion of some commentator ; leaving the people still undecided and unestablished, to be tossed too and fro with every wind of false doctrine : but decisively, unhesitatingly, and unequivocally, in the name, and in the fear of the Lord, he *fully* preaches the gospel, and declares, that it is made his *own* by the celestial seal of the Divine Comforter, and *committed* unto him, to proclaim to his fellow sinners, that they also under the Divine blessing, may be taught to know the *joyful sound* of salvation by bleeding love.

In this manner Paul went forth in the Great Immanuel’s name, declaring that the gospel, with all its blessings was

made his *own*; according to *MY gospel*, saith he—it is *MINE*; the Holy Spirit bears testimony to my *own individual interest* in it. I preach to you no “cunningly devised fable;” the things which I have learned in *secret* with my God, I declare upon the *house-top*; and so confident am I of their truth and preciousness, that I do not hesitate to say, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed, (Gal. i. 9.)

Contrast this short sketch of the ministerial character with the account already given of *self-serving* erroneous priests, who lord it over God’s heritage; and you will be led to see who the abominably wicked man is who prolongeth his life in, or by, his wickedness: a priest studious only of his own interest, ease, and aggrandizement: but who feedeth not the flock.

3. I cannot help thinking that **THE WICKED** so emphatically spoken of and described by Paul is especially intended by the **HOLY SPIRIT** as the **WICKED MAN** in this passage (vide 2 Thess. ii.)

And then we collect together in one focus all that can be called **POPERY** and **PRIESTCRAFT** wherever it exists throughout the world. Who indeed hath prolonged his life in and by his wickedness for centuries but whom God will destroy by the brightness of his appearing and by the sword of his mouth!

We have to bless the Lord, that amidst all the abounding of error, dry formality, and self-righteousness, we have among us at least a few names who have not defiled their garments therewith; a few faithful champions for free grace, and the glory of Christ in the Establishment, as well as out of it. To such men may the people of God hearken, and adhere for their support and encouragement; for they watch for souls, as those who must give an account—“receive them,” ye ransomed of the Lord, treat them well; esteem them highly in love for their work sake: for to whom are they, under God, to look, but to *you* for encouragement! The whole world besides, and especially the hypocritical part of it, is their most formidable enemy! “Brethren pray for us that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men, for all men have not faith.”

## QUESTION

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1824.

*Who is intended by the poor man in ECCL. IX. 14 ?*

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**SOLUTION.**

In all ages of the world, human nature has ever been the same: and the general conduct of men one toward another strikingly similar, with no other deviation than that which is produced by education and civilization. And even in the most enlightened and morally cultivated nations of the earth, where the gospel in the power of it has not been known, the cardinal passions of the human heart, have violently burst through every moral barrier, and exhibited man, vain man, the miserably *fallen creature* described in the Word of God! Which attests the authenticity of that holy Word, and proves that nothing short of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, can save men from their sins! If the grosser and more vulgar acts of immorality are, through good manners and politeness avoided, so far as men are exalted, and intrusted with power, so far will they, in some shape or other, exercise that consequence, pride, and tyranny with which they were born into the world. Hence the poor are generally despised; or if not despised, whatever wisdom they may display, are most commonly neglected, while the rich, however ignorant, are exalted. "Facile est opprimere innocentem."

The wisdom of Solomon, and his great acquaintance with men and manners are strikingly displayed, in a moral point of view, in the remarkable parable on which our question is founded: and which serves to shew that men in that remote age were actuated by the same principles, which produced the same conduct among mankind as that of which we have *now* to complain.

' The rich and poor but seldom meet  
On terms of amity complete,  
Plebeians must surrender,  
And yield so much to noble folk.  
'Tis like combining fire with smoke,  
Obscurity with splendor.—COWPER.

But the great intention of the Holy Spirit in the parable seems especially to concern the enquirer, and more particularly the *person* represented by the figure of a *poor* and *wise* man. In giving my answer I shall take notice

1. *Of the city*; which is the church of the living God, the people whom he hath chosen for himself, and who shall shew forth his praise. That beloved church, which though *little*, is builded as a city that is **COMPACT** together: for every member of the mystical body of our dear Lord, has, and ever will occupy that place appointed it from everlasting; “and shall grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body *fitly joined together*, and **COMPACTED** by that which every joint supplieth; according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Psalm cxxii. 3. Eph. iv. 15—16.) And though, comparatively, a *few* people in it, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; for within it is a **WISE**, an **UNBOUNDEDLY WISE MAN**, who by his wisdom and omnipotent prowess, has delivered the city: It is therefore a city of impregnable fortifications—“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a **STRONG CITY**: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks” (Isa. xxvi. 1.) And O the excellency of the government of this city! It is a gracious polity, a *theocratical* government; a government immediately from Jehovah himself! “For the Lord is our judge, the Lord, is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king: he will save us:” (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) He who is our king, and our lawgiver, is also our Savior and *will* save us! He governs us not by the terrors of the fiery law, but takes possession of our hearts by the sweetest effusions of his bleeding love, and there he rules in our affections!—It is Sion, the city of the living God, to which we are come, and where we are put into possession of all the great blessings of the gospel, enumerated and particularized in the 12th chap. of the Hebrews. Where “we are no more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow citizens* with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. ii. 19.)

A most delightful *river* gently flows through the city, the streams of which make glad the inhabitants. The bed or channel of the river is Christ Jesus our Lord: the wa-

ter, everlasting love and life, "clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," (Rev. xxii. 1.) flowing with immortal streams of salvation, that revive and keep alive, weary and heavy laden souls.

The watchmen of the city have an especial commission and charge to stand on its walls, and never hold their peace day nor night! Sion's walls are *salvation*, so well known, to those whom God employs rightly to divide the word of truth, and feed his children with knowledge and spiritual understanding. They stand on the walls in a military position, watching the motions of their enemies, and when danger is near, will sound an alarm in God's holy mountain. But time forbids me to give any thing like an adequate description of the holy city, which is sought out, and not forsaken of her God. (Isaiah lxii. 12.)

But one thing more, I must observe respecting its safety: that vigilant and faithful as the watchmen are, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm cxxvii. 1.) I might now notice, her pearly gates, and golden streets; and the immensity of her riches and choice provisions; but I spare myself time, by affectionately entreating you, believers in Jesus; to take a view of Sion yourselves; it will much delight you; it will do your hearts good: "Walk about Sion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof: Mark ye well her bulwarks consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm xlvi. 12—14.)

2. It was a *little* city. Yet John beheld it a *great* city, Rev. xxi. 5. "That great city, the holy Jerusalem descending from God:" but John had a view of the whole redeemed *collectively*; the complete body of the elect, and in that case, he had a most beautiful view, of "a great number, which no man can number," ransomed from among men, by the blood of Christ. In this portion of scripture, the church in her state of trial and militant conflicts, is intended, as divided, though but one in Christ, into small numbers, denominated "the little hills, which rejoice on every side." (Psalm lxxv. 11.)

They are *little* in their own estimation; and in the eyes

of an ungodly and persecuting world, not only little, but "the *off-scouring* of all things," and as sheep for the slaughter:" but they are truly great in the eyes of their Redeemer, who gave the *great* price of his own life for their ransom! They are the little flock, to whom the Father delights to give a kingdom, that fadeth not away, whose foundation and builder is God! They are comparatively a "little city, and a few people." Compared with the whole inhabitants of the globe, how few profess Christianity, and among the nations denominated *christian*, how few pretend to know the gospel in the power of it; and among those who are called together to hear the gospel preached, how few are effectually called and born of God! So evidently true is the distinguishing language of Jesus, "Many be called, but FEW CHOSEN!" That is, many are called together, by the sound of the gospel trumpet, but few are blessed with a knowledge of their *eternal* and *personal election*, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. *The great king, who came against the city.* The king intended here, is *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils, with his numerous legions; who is a *great* king, on account of the number of his subjects; having under him, the whole inhabitants of the earth, with the happy exception only of those who are delivered from his awful tyranny, by the Holy Spirit, who hath quickened their immortal souls." You hath he quickened, saith Paul, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein, in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE of the *power of the air*, the spirit that *now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" (Eph. ii. 42.) Which proves that the whole world are under his tyranny, except those to whom the gospel has come not in word only, but also in power. Hence the same apostle says, that when Christ effectually called him, and commissioned him to promulgate the gospel, he declared, among other important things, that he had sent him, "To open the eyes of the Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the POWER OF Satan unto God!" (Acts xxvi. 18.) And Christ himself stiles this great king, "The prince of this world," having the whole world under his diabolical dominion: on which account, John thus addresses the church. "We know

that we are of God, and the *whole world*, lieth in wickedness: *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται :*" *In illo improbo*, jacere: (BEZA :) lie in him the WICKED one. "In malo jacere, (CASTELLIO) lie in the wicked, ill-meaning, and designing one; or in the *wicked*, the emphatically *wicked tyrant*, who hath usurped the most horrid dominion over mankind! O what slaves and tools of the devil, are men in their sins! "Led captive by him at his will!" and O how gloriously powerful the grace, the all-sufficient grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that delivereth us from his power, and leads us to trample on the old serpent and the dragon by faith in the Redeemer's blood! That precious blood in which we "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one!"

4. *He came against the city and besieged it.* Successful indeed, was his first attack on man, in throwing him down from his pristine holiness, into the most horrid state of sin, guilt, shame, and rebellion against his Maker, ignorance, and spiritual death, with an exposure to death eternal! And prior to the appearance of the great God, and our Saviour, in human flesh, his perpetual aim, in all his temptations, was to lead believers in the *coming Messiah* to disbelieve and dishonour the God of grace! His sieges, how numerous! but as often, did "the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him;" the glorious standard of Immanuel, the *wise* man, who by his wisdom, most admirably delivered them, the city of our God, from the threatened invasions of the terrible enemy! And he who delivered Old Testament saints, will still deliver all who make his name their trust, For "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous flee, in the time of trouble, and are safe."

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*Owing to the lateness of the hour and the IMPORTANCE of the subject, it was unanimously agreed to*

**ADJOURN THE QUESTION**

**TILL NEXT MONDAY EVENING.**

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