

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XXXVI.] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1824.

Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν πανί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1824.

QUESTION.

Has not the Devil a way of deceiving souls by impressing them with sensations, in which he attempts to imitate the experience of the children of God? If so, what are those internal deceptions?

SOLUTION.

HOW inexplicably tender the conscience, under the first work of grace; and how innumerable the efforts of Satan to afflict, wound, and perplex such an unestablished soul! The truth is *doctrinally* known, and the very faith of God's elect, so far, most cordially embraced; but *unbelief* so successfully predominates, concerning *personal* interest in Christ, known only by *effectual* calling, that the enemy of souls avails himself of the opportunity of forming plausible objections, against the sinner's salvation, and proposes questions of painful embarrassment and perplexity.—Hence, the question before us, which though, as it respects the *Querist's* motives, is *good*; and for which I thank him; is, notwithstanding, miserably calculated to distress and keep the babe in Christ from the enjoyment of the sin-

cere milk of the word! The design of the enemy in such critical suggestion, is to prevent the soul from entering into rest in the Lord Jesus: and from growing in grace, and in a knowledge of the love of God.

But in all his malicious efforts to distress the elect vessel, and dishonor the eternally honorable Jesus; he fails in his purposes, and never accomplishes his intended design! Tho' as a serpent, he is wise, and is denominated a lion for strength, how easily are all his plans overthrown and frustrated by Infinite Wisdom, and Omnipotent Power. The Lord suffers him thus to assail the saints for his eventual mortification, the promotion of their comfort, and the abounding praise of the Gracious Savior!

Thus, though this question is confessedly calculated to distress, it will eventually promote the establishment of the soul in personal religion, as it leads to the nicest enquiry into things that differ, and to the most strict, sincere, and important engagement of self-examination.

In the critical enquiry, let us with a solemnity becoming those who seek after the truth for themselves, consider,

1. *That Satan has much to do with religion.*

1. He has his *doctrines* that are pronounced by the Holy Spirit, "*The doctrines of devils.*" Which lead sinners, "to trust in themselves, that they are righteous, and despise others." To erect the old *Pelagian idol, free-will*, and worship the works of their own hands! To glory in their fleshly sanctity, and with the disdain of Arminian pride, to hold up to contempt and ridicule, by artful and misrepresenting sophistry, the riches of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

2. He is the great supporter of Antichrist. All the pomp pageantry, mummary, superstition, false doctrine, and blasphemy of Rome, and her adherents, have his especial and continual support! Those floods of ungodliness under the pretence of religious worship, and creature goodness, and piety, in opposition to Christ, are poured out of the mouth of the old serpent, the dragon!

3. He persuades the haughty Pharisees, that they are safe, and that it shall go well with them: it is he who keeps them in their legal bonds and carnal security, by blinding their eyes to a view of their real state, as fallen sinners, and

hardening their hearts, and stirring up their enmity against the Lord, and against his anointed! Against all the power and glory being ascribed to Jesus, in the complete salvation of the elect family of God. According to the words of our dear Lord, he is evidently their leader in their *self-righteous religion*, and takes a pleasure in it, because it is established in direct opposition to the holy religion that comes down from heaven, and which leads the soul under its unctious influence, to trust alone in, and give all the glory to Christ! Whose words to such pretendedly holy people, were, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the Father of it.”—(John viii. 44.)

Here the *false* doctrines, or deceptive doctrines of the devil, are traced to their *infernal* source, and stated in their proper position: a direct hostility to Christ and his gospel: against which, the father of lies, and his proud, pretendedly holy, and self righteous children, have the most implacable enmity!

4. He is transformed, *religiously* transformed into an angel of light. It becomes us, then, to be aware of the external appearance of godliness, and not to “judge after the flesh,” nor to regard the speech of those who are puffed up, but the power. For men may come to you as apostles, with the pleasing garb of outward holiness, and with the still more pleasing and fascinating address of *smooth*, and flesh-pleasing rationality: tickling your ears, exalting your favorite idol, *self-salvation*, and with specious flattery, feeding your Arminian pride, and appear as angels of light, while they themselves are the vassals and messengers of Satan, and you, their awfully deluded dupes! *priest-ridden*, by men whose godliness is gain, and who as hirelings, care not for the flock! On this awful subject thus speaks the Holy Spirit: “Such are *false* apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed, as the *ministers* of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2 Cor. xi. 13—15.)

5. But whether he can imitate the sensations of those

who are born of a spiritual birth, is the question? He can do many things to the distress of the saints, and the dishonor of God; and will do them, so far he is permitted: There are *two especial* things that he practices daily: *first* he persuades the unconverted professor, on the ground of his holy performance of legal duties, to believe that he is regenerated. Second, he is most eloquent in his addresses to babes in Christ, and alas! often very successful, in persuading them to believe that they are *not* regenerated!

We will now look into the principal things which he can perform as religious imitations.

1. He so exceedingly well imitates, *externally*, the religion of the Holy Jesus, and so very successfully, that he persuades thousands of souls to rest and trust in the form of godliness, devoid of the power: "Having the form of godliness, saith the apostle, but denying the *power* thereof from such turn away."

To be *godly*, is to be *godlike* in holiness, wearing the very righteousness and holiness of God. To be decidedly for him, his truth and his cause. Such are the people of God internally and heartily; and such are also the pretensions of some professors destitute of the power! The former with the warmest affection defend and abide by God's truth, with a firmness and constancy of soul, peculiar to themselves: the latter know, and hold the exalted doctrines of the gospel, and deny, or at least are careless of the experience of God's children, calling it childish, and sometimes, weak and beggarly elements:—Thus, Satan, transforms himself into an angel of light, and by an outward imitation of real godliness, deceives immortal souls.

2. He can, and does encourage a false zeal, as he did, in the Galatian churches, when the greater part of their members, who would once have pulled out their own eyes, and have given them to Paul, afterward considered him as their enemy because he told them the truth, and with **FALSE ZEAL** adhered to, and embraced the Judaizing teachers.

Fleshly zeal will make a more resplendent blaze, externally, than even the genuine zeal of a child of God: for the former is agreeable and pleasing to nature, and consequently instead of meeting with natural opposition, is a sweet gratification to the flesh; whereas the latter being spiritual, acts counter to nature, and is sure to be opposed

by all the powers and passions of the flesh, which lusts against the Spirit: the one contends for error and self-righteousness, which feed the vanity and ambition of the OLD MAN, the other for Christ, grace, and truth, which are disagreeable to him, and are certain to have all the opposition that can possibly emanate from the enmity of the carnal mind! Thus, Jehu, could very warmly say to Jehonidab, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord," and so exceedingly zealous he was, as to slay all the worshippers of Baal, and to burn their images, "howbeit from the sins of Jereboham, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit the GOLDEN CALVES that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan!" Such outward zeal we have seen, and see much of in this present day of proud profession, zealously attempting to convert nations to Christianity, while the zealots themselves wrapped up in their own beautiful performances, know not the plague of their hearts, nor once individually enquire, "am I born from above!"

3. He can, and does IMITATE the humility of the Christian: but it is in the examination of the child of God, a mean and detestable imitation! Spurious indeed: for when scripturally examined, it proves to be rank pride and vain-glory! Paul has called it "voluntary humility—vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind!" (Col. ii 18.) Such feigned humility, which is one of the devil's ingenious counterfeits, passes current with thousands of Christian professors, while the real coin of the king of Zion is rejected as dross! Its component parts are high pretensions to personal holiness, long faces, seemingly pious tones, and grave accents, long prayers and graces to be seen and heard of men, and much zeal for creature excellence, to the scandalizing of free grace, with the epithet of Antinomianism, and to the persecuting the God-sent ministers of everlasting truth. "I persecuted the church of God and wasted it, saith Paul, referring to the time, when he was the PIOUS SAUL of Tarsus; who, as touching the law, was then, in his own estimation, blameless, and thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Whereas, genuine humility, consists of a self-abasing sense of sin, with humble confession of it, privately before God,

a humble reliance upon Christ, with love to his name, his truth and his people, little conversation on divine subjects, and that with solemnity, and with an eye to the glory of God: walking worthy of the heavenly vocation, and holding others in greater estimation than themselves. This is the humility of which the Holy Spirit himself is the glorious and glorified author.

4. He further imitates Christianity by persuading sinners that a dead faith, such as he possesses himself, (for "devils believe and tremble,") is that living faith with which God blesses his children. He persuades them that a belief in the *literal* statements of gospel doctrines is the faith of God's elect which worketh by love. This he does to keep them from an enquiry after regeneration and experimental godliness! You may be as high as the heavens in Calvinistic doctrines for aught the devil cares, or the world either; it is the power of godliness in the soul of a child of God which they unitedly oppose and persecute. Thus a man may know from the letter of scripture, and preach the doctrines of the gospel, while he remains destitute of *the new birth*. But alas! it will not do before our God!

"No big words of ready talkers,
No dry doctrines will suffice;
Broken hearts, and humble walkers,
They are dear in Jesus' eyes."—HART.

Now we come to the question immediately, and ask most solemnly and seriously; amidst all these plausible imitations of the devil, can he imitate *those sensations which are the effects of divine impressions on the soul of a real believer*? And in order to solve this important problem we must first examine the *sensations* themselves, with which none but God's regenerated children are feelingly acquainted.

1. Repentance, godly sorrow, the heart ache, on account of indwelling sin, the pain of mind grievously felt by one who pants after Christ, with longing desires to enjoy communion with him; and I am bold to aver that the devil might as well attempt at the creation of another sun, with a system of orbs revolving around it, as to attempt the *imitation* of these holy impressions of the Spirit of Christ. Poor distressed sinner fear not—Satan may persuade you that he is the author of these in your sighing soul; but re-

member he proposed to give Christ all the kingdoms of the world, when not an atom of our globe was, or could possibly be at his disposal!

2. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. This is a sweet sensation indeed! impressing the soul with an exultation in all the attributes of God, sweetly harmonizing in his salvation shining illustriously in the bleeding Messiah! Will the devil thus point a sinner to Christ? Can he illuminate his mind with heavenly light, and

Take his soul, ere he's aware,
And shew him where God's glories are?"

Yes, he may, when the powers of darkness become refulgent light! when the super-abundance of God's grace shall delight him, and he shall love that Saviour whom he will for ever implacably hate, with all the extremes of his hellish malice and indignation! *and not till then*—which never can possibly take place!

3. Life. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." You are "passed from death unto life." Can this wonderful transition be *imitated* by hell! Can the devil, in any way whatever, feign those sensations of vivacity by which you rejoice that your life is hidden with Christ, and that because he lives you shall live also? Can he possibly imitate those vivifying communications of divine forgiveness and acceptance with God, that raise all your immortal powers with rapturous praise and innate gratitude to him who hath loved, redeemed, called, justified, and promised you eternal glory! As soon shall holiness become sin, and hell itself be converted into a heaven, as Satan in any respect mimic life in Christ, and spiritual life from him communicated by the Holy Spirit!

4. The sensations of divine love. The glorious reciprocity of the knowledge of interest in God's love and an unfeigned love to him, reigns in the heart of the believer. Can he counterfeit this love? no, he has no materials with which to operate; he has no knowledge whatever of the sweetly sublime sensation.

The devils know, and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love!"

5. Fervent prayer, under a deep sense of sin, unworthiness, and innumerable wants and necessities. Such prayer is privately offered up to God, in the name of Christ,

with groanings which cannot be uttered, and can no more be imitated by the powers of darkness, than they can inspire the soul with an hatred of sin, and holy aspirations of love to the Lord Jesus Christ!

6. Fellowship with God: or partnership. This implies communion between the parties; reconciliation and agreement. Two cannot walk together, except they are agreed. The covenant is revealed, and the cause of God becomes the saved sinner's cause! He has an interest in the firm. It is not only his delight, but his privilege to be indefatigably assiduous in the divine service. And O in that service, which is perfect freedom, how sweet, how delightful is his fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! Satan is as much a stranger to this spiritual communion, as were the *Egyptians* to the delights of Joseph's brethren, when he revealed himself to them, and there stood no man, no stranger with him.

With such joys a stranger intermeddleth not; consequently Satan cannot intermeddle; and then it follows unavoidably, that he cannot imitate such unspeakably sublime communion.

I, therefore, positively and confidently *negative* the subject of the Question; and answer with an assurance of the truth of it in my own heart and conscience, *That the devil cannot imitate the spiritual sensations of God's divinely taught people!*

Fear not, then, dear believer, such may be his haughty pretension, and powerful suggestion, to which we *must* not, *cannot* give place, no not for a moment! For could we once believe this, we should be divested of all the consolations of the Holy Comforter, and the high and untold felicities of our souls, derived from sweet views of interest in Christ, would be, by unbelief, converted into *Satanic imitations*: to our perpetual distress, and the awful dishonor of the Holy Teacher of the Redeemed Israel of God!

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

If a *real believer* cannot fall from grace, why did the apostle Paul say to the Galatians, "*Ye are fallen from grace.*" (Gal. v. 4.)

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XXXVII.] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1824.

Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1824.

QUESTION.

If a *real believer* cannot fall from grace, why did the apostle Paul say to the Galatians, "*Ye are fallen from grace?*" (Gal. v. 4.)

SOLUTION.

THE perseverance of the saints through this wilderness to eternal glory, shines brilliantly as a star of the first magnitude, or rather as a constellation of the most beautiful stars, in the celestial sphere of God's most holy word! In which are the covenant oath, and everlasting love of the Eternal Three: the grace, mercy, tender care, watchfulness, and faithfulness of our God to his sacred engagements, and inviolable promises! Could the saints of God, or any one of them, fall away, and perish for ever, all the divine attributes would sink into disgrace, and the Lord Jesus would lose his divine honors, as the Almighty Savior of his people. While the powers of hell would triumph over the purchase of his precious blood: and rejoice in the inefficacy of that blood to save those for whom it was so freely shed.

Their shout of victory over the Omnipotent Immanuel,

might then be thus expressed ; “ Here is a soul, for which that boasted Savior bled ; and one, too, that on earth was called to make his name its trust : but his faithfulness failed, and we have been successful in our efforts in bringing it into these, our gloomy regions of eternal damnation !

Here, here is proof sufficient, that he is *not* able to save to the uttermost,—*not* able to conduct to the world of glory, those for whom he died !

Here is a *blood-bought* soul in the confines of endless woe ! Victory ! victory over Immanuel, and his boasted cross ! O horrible, gloomy, frightful thought ! If one may thus perish, it follows so may all ! Then we are without any security whatever ! But, blessed be God ! the powers of hell shall never triumph over Jesus, nor see one in the regions of darkness for whom he died !

“ In the world of endless ruin,
Shall it ever, Lord, be said,
Here’s a soul that perish’d suing
For the boasted Savior’s aid !”

No : saith our ever-blessed Jesus ; “ I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish ! Thanks, eternal thanks to thy holy name, O most lovely and omnipotent Immanuel ! for this blessed assurance, and that from thine own gracious lips, of the saint’s glorification ! We may, we *will* confide in thee, and trust alone to thy sin-removing blood, and divine righteousness, for our acceptance and justification before God ! making thy own precious, thrice precious words our daily boast, and our unlimited confidence—“ **THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH !**”

O ye lost, wretched, and sin polluted souls, who seek the Mighty Savior ; take fresh courage, and venture on his complete salvation ! Hear his encouraging language, and join our triumph in his love, and faithfulness ; “ *They shall never perish !*” *They*,—his sheep for whom he laid down his life ! And, who are they, characteristically, when called by grace ? The vilest sinners upon the earth, in their own estimation : the most ignorant, and the most unworthy : but they seek Jesus : yes, and notwithstanding their doubts about it, they love him too ! They love him most dearly : for what could they do without him ! Without him, they must everlastingly perish : but he has said, “ *They shall never perish !*” The soul, then, that thus

seeks the mighty Savior; that has no other refuge but his bleeding wounds, and no other hope but in his name, shall *persevere* to eternal life, and be for ever with the Lord! This being the case, I am requested to take into consideration the words of Paul, which seem a complete contradiction to the saint's perseverance; for he says, positively, "*Ye are fallen from grace.*"

In compliance with the request, I shall notice *first*, the principal word in Paul's assertion, GRACE, which sounds charmingly indeed in the ears of those, who have felt its sweet and powerful influence in their hearts. The very word excludes all boasting from the saved sinner, and ascribes all the power and glory of our salvation, alone unto the God of our lives.

Xapıs, gratia, a favour conferred, without any expectation in the donor of receiving any return! and implying, in the case of the poor sinner, a total inability of ever making any return, for such invaluable and boundless benevolence!

1. "*It is the grace of God!*" or free favour of God:—scripturally so called, as it is his own property; and consequently at his own disposal, to confer on whomsoever he pleases

2. It is also denominated, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!*" which proves him to be the TRUE God; as grace is evidently confined in the scriptures, to the Eternal Deity. Indeed, it is attributed alone to the Eternal Three: hence the apostle, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost*"—clearly expressing the grace, love, and unity of the Three Persons, or *subsistences*, wrapped up in one another, in that incomprehensibly glorious, boundless and *eternal essence*, which is God; and consequently, is *incommunicable* to any creature of whatever order. And thus we incontrovertibly prove, that Christ is God, by his possessing that grace which is the exclusive property, and rests entirely in the bosom of Deity. We have, in our regenerated souls, the wonderful *work of grace*, and live, and act under its sacred guidance, and Christ-glorifying influences; but grace itself, is alone in God: hence the exhortation, "*Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus,*" (not in you.") He claims it as his own, when he kindly as-

sure you in the time of soul-trouble, "MY GRACE is sufficient for you." May we be enabled to look out of ourselves to him, who will give more grace; who resisteth the proud, but giveth *grace* to the humble.

Thus the aid, the influence, the energies, and sweet support of grace, are made ours by the free gift of God; but he alone is the fountain head, whence issue those delightful streams for our refreshment in the dry and barren desert, through which we are travelling to the city of habitation. With respect to its *qualities or properties*, I am fully authorized by the word of God to term it,

1. **ETERNAL GRACE**, *favor*, or *good will*. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own *purpose* and *grace*, which was given us, in Christ Jesus, before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.)

2. **SOVEREIGN grace**: That is, entirely at his own disposal, as I have before observed. Had he made no gracious provision whatever, for any of the human race, who could have justly complained? And while he confers his grace *most freely* on some, and leave the rest, who shall find fault? *His grace is his own*, emanating from the fountain of his free and everlasting love, down the channel of a precious Christ, to his own elect; and to the rest, he does no injury, as he takes nothing from them, but leaves them (as he might have left us) in that state into which they plunged themselves, by sinning against him! *Grace*, then is *sovereign* and *distinguishing*; to the Eternal glory of the Omnipotent Sovereign of the skies, who said to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) Paul quotes this scripture, in defence of God's sovereign power to dispense his blessings of grace, as he pleaseth, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, (addeth the apostle) it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 15. 16.)

Let the *Arminians*, and all those who seem inclined to *undeify* God, in order to *deify themselves*; who talk of the *sovereign will of man*, to save or damn his own soul, at

his pleasure, while they contemn the sovereign grace of God; who would

▪ Snatch from his hand, the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God."

Let such persons strut about in the *linsey-woolsey* garment of their own manufacturing, and deny the *right* of God to dispose of his own grace and gifts as seemeth good in his sight, we will rejoice that our God is in the heavens, "*and has done whatsoever it hath pleased him,*" and humbly fall at his feet. with submission to his divine sovereignty, blessing him that he hath given us a place in his house, and numbered us with his adopted children, crying in the language of admiration, "Even so Father, because it hath seemed good in thy sight!"

3. *Grace*, in the very nature of it, must be free, and unmerited; "without money, and without price." For the slightest idea of merit, alters, in the sinner's view, the shape and form of the object he contemplates, under the name and title of *grace*; and not only perplexes his mind; but involves him in the greatest confusion of thought, as it leads him to reflect on an object, which does not in reality exist. For who can conceive of a *purchased* gift! a dearly earned premium! a highly merited *favour*! a *working hard* to obtain a *gratuitous kindness*!

Who can conceive of such an object without perplexity and confusion of thought! Such are the *self contradictions*, such the inconsistencies of Arminianism, and the doctrines of the duty-faith men. The motley garb of the former, exhibits to the sinner a salvation, seemingly of *grace*; but O the *labor* to be *performed*, the *terms* and *conditions* to be fulfilled, before the sinner has sufficiently merited this *grace*! Indeed, it is not accessible, nor completely attainable, without *fleshly perfection*. The latter will talk of election; and even of particular redemption, (though of these doctrines, they speak very cautiously, and very sparingly) but anon, the *whole world* is invited to partake of saving *grace*, which they have the effrontery to offer, but yet the *whole world* is told, that this *grace* is not to be procured in any other way, than by *performing* the duty of faith, which is the *duty of all men*!

That is, according to their inconsistent, and shockingly confused system, it is the *duty* of the non-elect to elect

themselves, and write their own names in the Lamb's book of life: and to believe that Christ died for them, though they are not of his sheep, as he said unto the Pharisees of old.

It is evident, that the non-elect have no *INTEREST* in election, adoption, and redemption; and yet, ministers, who profess to believe and to preach those sublime doctrines, tell the *whole bulk of mankind*, that it is their *duty* to believe! What a confused mass of doctrinal inconsistencies! for it follows, unavoidably from this hypothesis, that it is the duty of the non-elect to believe a lie!

But amidst all this religious, or rather *irreligious* confusion, and misrepresentation of grace, blessed be God, he has given us, in his holy word, clear and divinely perspicuous statements of his grace, in its infinite *freeness*! And however some may d claim against the incumbent office I am now executing, that of *detecting error*, the Holy Spirit has adopted that very method, in exhibiting to our view, the riches, freeness, sovereignty and omnipotency of grace, in its aboundings to the chief of sinners. He directs Paul to say, "If by *grace* then, it is *no more of works*: otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be *of works*, then it is no more grace: otherwise, work is no more work." (Rom xi. 6) "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, (*it is not your duty*) it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

Works and grace, we see clearly in these two scriptures cannot be mingled, nor stand together: the one, or the other, must fall. But blessings for ever on the Lamb of God! The fountain of all grace; that works are excluded entirely from the plan of our salvation; that is to say, the pretendedly holy *duties*, by which we once expected to merit that free grace, which alone shall be exalted, and reign through righteousness, unto eternal life!

We must now take under our particular notice,

II. FALLING FROM GRACE.

1. Paul does not say, in the portion of scripture, on which the question is founded, *we are fallen out of the hands of Christ*: that is forbidden by his own negative, and thereby rendered impossible! Thanks to his precious name! who hath said concerning his redeemed sheep, "*none shall*

pluck you out of my hands." I have been told, that a celebrated Arminian preacher once said, "Though none can pluck them out of his hands, they may, if they are not particularly careful, *slip through his fingers:*" but he ought to have known scripture well enough, to have been assured, that they are not in the *finger* part of Jehovah's hands, who hath said to his everlastingly loved church, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the *PALMS* of my hands." (Isai. xlix: 16.) He has them in the fast grasp of his omnipotent love, and will never let them go till he has brought them to glory.

2. Neither does the apostle say, *ye are fallen out of the covenant of grace:* the tenor of which is, "I will not depart from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me."

3. The Father hath loved them with an everlasting love, and cannot forego his eternal affection, nor suffer the objects of his delight to perish!

4. The Son, hath dearly bought, and paid for them, and will never *resign* the travail of his soul, nor suffer them finally to fall; he demands their presence with him in eternal glory, as his blood-bought right: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.)

5. The Holy Spirit, who begins the good work in them, will perform it until the day of Christ. (Phil. i. 6.) and under his divine teaching, guidance, and holy influence, "The righteous shall hold on his way and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger." (Job xvii. 9.) And surely, the following testimony of Christ himself to their perseverance, must be indisputable, with all who will allow of his unerring authority; "Whosoever drinketh of the water, that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him, a well of water springing up into *everlasting life.*" (John iv. 14.)

6. All the attributes of Jehovah are harmoniously engaged in the perseverance of the saints. His wisdom, love, power, justice, mercy, and goodness: all of which must fail and sink in eternal dishonor, if an elect vessel can possibly fall from grace, and everlastingly perish.

7. The honor and glory of the Eternal Three, secure the glorification of those who are called according to the Divine purpose.

8. Yet the people of God, may, and do fall, but not finally. They may fall by their iniquities by the temptations of the devil, and also they may fall from their steadfastness in the truth of God; and be *entangled again with the yoke of bondage*; which was evidently the intention of the apostle, in thus addressing the Galatians,

“Ye are fallen from grace.”

Through the baneful effects of legal preaching, they were led to intermix law and gospel: to be circumcised, and adhere to the law of Moses—to the desertion of Christ. Preferring the servant, to the master of the house. They were fallen from the doctrines of *grace*; from their warm attachment to them, and their ardent zeal for them: but this proves nothing of their losing the *grace of God out of their hearts*, as some people ignorantly talk: for the apostle, in the same epistle, calls the very same persons, “his little children for whom he travailed again in birth, till Christ was formed in them;” which sufficiently satisfies me, and ought to satisfy all who believe the Bible, that though fallen from a firm belief in the doctrines of grace, as distinct and separate from the law, they were yet the subjects of regeneration, and should be eventually restored. My answer to the question, is, then, that all the *called* children of God shall persevere, and that Paul did not write inconsistently with that doctrine, in asserting, “*Ye are fallen from grace*;” as he evidently intended no more than from a belief in the doctrines of grace.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

What is the intention of the Holy Spirit, in 1 John iii. 3. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure?

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XXXVIII.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1824.

Τὸ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1824.

QUESTION.

*What is the intention of the Holy Spirit, in 1 John iii. 3.
“And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure?”*

SOLUTION.

ALL the works of the Lord praise him: the earth teems with his goodness, the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament is one continued and brilliant display of his stupendous wisdom, and all-creative power! Which, as objects of contemplation, delight our minds, and lead us, overcome with their beauty and grandeur, silently to “*muse his praise;*” or lost in admiration, to fall in humble prostration at his feet, and adore the Great Architect of the skies, the Former of the Vast Universe, and the adorable Author of our being, in the admiring language of the *royal Psalmist*, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast created, Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him!”

And as his *works*, the produce of his wisdom and power, thus overcome us with astonishment, how shall we trace

the *existence*, the *nature* of that Eternal Being, whose glory the heaven of heavens cannot contain! I am called upon, by the question, to treat of his DIVINE PURITY! But alas! who among fallen and *impure* mortals is sufficient, even to glance at this glorious attribute, the *purity*, which has been denominated the *beauty* of Jehovah! I most humbly acknowledge my inadequacy; for we must die to be fully acquainted with all the glories of his *holiness*: “no man,” saith he to Moses, “can see my face and live.” Yet, “there is a rock, saith the Lord, and I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, while I cause my glory to pass before thee.” And if the Holy Spirit, is graciously pleased to put me, this evening, into the cleft of that rock,—I also shall behold his glory. For that rock is Christ: and it is only in the face of Jesus Christ, that we can behold the glory of God and the exaltation of his infinite purity, in the salvation of the people that he hath *purified* unto himself. (Tit. ii. 14.) That unspotted purity, which is incapable of pollution, can admit of no imperfection, whatever, in the person with whom he deigns to hold communion! “Without holiness, no man can see the Lord,” who hath declared, “I will, by no means, clear the guilty.” It is vain and presumptuous to talk of his acceptance of *an imperfect obedience*: he will not, he cannot consistently with his glorious holiness, accept of any but that which is unmixed, unpolluted, unremitting, immaculate, and “pure even as he is pure!” Whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all. A *momentarily evil thought* exposes the sinner, as much to the frowns of inexorable justice, as the commission of the vilest crime: and renders salvation by the works of the law, absolutely impossible! For, who is to be found that has never had an evil thought? Are they not the continual and innumerable inhabitants of the human heart! Consequently, “by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh living be justified!”

Talk no more, then, ye workmongers, of God's acceptance of an imperfect obedience on the ground of its *sincerity*: if you are ever so sincere, he cannot accept of your obedience: it is polluted with sin, and *Arminian* pride, which alone, would damn the soul, if no other charge whatever was found against you! The regenerated child

of God, sees and knows the impossibility of his carrying any obedience of *his own* before the divine throne, in promotion of his purity: he knows, he sees, and feels too much, the exceeding sinfulness of his own heart, leaving out his practical transgressions, ever to hope for acceptance with God in any other, than the immaculate, and eternally perfect obedience of Christ! (Rom. v. 19.)

Such is the person who "*hath this hope in himself.*"

1. THE HOPE. It is an hope, according to the verses immediately preceding and connected with the *verse* on which the question rests, in the love of our covenant Father, who hath called us his *sons*, and has promised that when Christ shall appear, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!" which hope is so sweetly inspiring with delight in God, dependance on Christ, exaltation above the world, and boldness of access to the Lord in prayer and praise, that it leads the possessor of it to purify himself, even as God is pure! But let it be particularly remarked, that this *self-purification* is confined to, and known alone by, the person who hath this *hope!* which hath Christ alone for its glorious object, when all other hopes and expectations are cut off, and despair approaches the truly humbled and convinced sinner! The Holy Spirit then leads him to Jesus; and he is constrained to acknowledge; "I have no hope except in Christ: I am lost, except he receives me graciously, and loves me freely!" And what other hope would you have, poor wretched sinner! What other hope do you need, save Jesus, and him crucified? The apostle, hath very decisively declared concerning Christ, "*He is our hope.*"

2. The Holy Spirit is the author of it in the soul: It is an hope in the believer, which springs from a *gracious* and *internal* revelation of Christ. Hence, saith the apostle, very emphatically: "To whom God would make known, what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, *the hope of glory.*"—Col. i. 27.

3. Hope is founded on faith. It is an expectation of the things which are promised of God. Faith embraces the promise, hope the things promised; which are good, suitable, and desirable; but absent, out of sight, future, yet sure to arrive in God's appointed time. *Faith* says,

here is the promise, which cannot be violated ; for it is the *unconditional* promise of God ! I therefore live upon it ; *love* says, let me immediately be put in possession of the blessings which are promised ! But *hope* comes in and says, *Wait the Lord's time*, " tarry his leisure : " " For we are saved by *hope* : but hope that is seen, is not *hope* : for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. "— (Rom. viii. 24, 25.)

4. It is " a *good* hope through grace ; " for it hath a good object, Christ Jesus : a *good* foundation ; faith in his unerring word of promise ; and a *good* prospect, glory : " In *hope* of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. " (Tit. i. 2.)

5. It is a " blessed *hope* ; " for it has in view, and expects to enjoy, all the vast and eternal blessings, with which Jehovah has infinitely enriched his everlasting covenant !

6. " We have this *hope* as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. " (Heb. vi. 19.) In all our storms, tempests, and tossings to and fro ; it *expects*, and assures us of deliverance ; and that we shall arrive safe at the desired haven ! So that amidst our severest afflictions, we sometimes can individually sing,

" My anchor HOPE, shall firm abide,
And I each boisterous storm outride. "

II. THE PURIFICATION. The difficulty seems to be that of purifying *himself* : which he evidently does, according to the apostle in the words, but

1. Not by the deeds or duties of the law, of the *fiery* law, nor of any law whatever : For as man is inwardly and naturally impure ; and as the imaginations of his heart are only evil, and that continually, it follows perspicuously, that no external purification will do any thing whatever, toward that purity of heart, which is essential to seeing and holding communion with God. Ye may, as Christ informed the Jews, wash the OUTSIDE of the cup or the platter, but WITHIN it remains full of uncleanness. Attend to all possible external purifications, -- pray, fast, read the word of God, give alms, and perform every private, relative, domestic, and social duty, that natural conscience can dictate, you are still the unclean and impure in heart, with whom God

can hold no communion, except ye are washed in your very soul with the washing of regeneration, and renewed by the Holy Ghost. (Tit. iii. 5.)

2. Neither is it by a *fleshly* and *partial* sanctification, called progressive *holiness within*: For, “can a clean thing come out of an unclean?” Can that which is one complete mass of corruption, as is the *old man of sin*, ever become pure? Has not God put his negative to such a doctrine, in Rom. viii. 7. “*The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.*” He has, moreover, graciously informed us, that the old man is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and to those who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, he says put ye on the **NEW** man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Here the **OLD** and the **NEW** man, or the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, are placed by the Lord himself, in direct opposition to each other. (Eph. iv. 22—24. Gal. v. 17.) After this clear, because scriptural statement, I am not fearful to affirm that the doctrine of fleshly sanctification, which is the favorite doctrine of the day, is in direct opposition to the word of the Lord, and must be highly offensive in his sight! How dares a man, and a professed minister too, in the face of these decisive scriptures, and in the sight of the God of all grace, tell a poor deluded soul, that he must purify his nature, his corrupt nature, and *progressively procure holiness* of heart: whereas, the plain truth is, that a sinner taught of God, digs deeper, and discovers greater abominations, making progression in a knowledge of his unworthiness, till he falls down, and there is none to help, crying in the anguish of his soul, *unclean! unclean!* and pants for Christ, whose blood alone, cleanses from all sin.

3. How then does he purify himself.—I answer, by looking unto Jesus; this is the act of faith, which is his own act, as a new creature: yet as the new creature is the workmanship of God, and faith, his especial gift, it is to the praise of the glory of his grace; here, boasting is excluded by the law of faith, and yet the sinner, actively engaged to the honor of the Eternal Jesus. Looking unto Jesus, saith Paul, the author and finisher of our faith. This is the glorious, the beautiful position of the child of God: he looks and lives; views the fountain of his blood, and is

purified; believes, and his conscience is *purified* by faith. For faith is not a mere belief of the doctrines of truth, but a delightfully active principle: hence it is said, that happy souls now in glory, "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." That is, by precious faith, they plunged in the fountain, that cleanses from sin and uncleanness, and rejoiced, that though their sins were scarlet and crimson, they were white as snow, or as wool!—Look not upon me, saith the church, because I am black: for though black in myself as a fallen sinner, I am comely through the comeliness that my beloved has put upon me. It is a purification then, by *Divine blood*. All the bleeding sacrifices offered under the ceremonial law, typified and to the believing view of those taught of God, most precious exhibited the wonderful and altogether lovely antitype of them all, Christ Jesus, and him crucified! I am well assured, that if the precious blood of Christ, in its amazing virtue, to cleanse the conscience of a sinner from all guilt, was experimentally known by those, who profess to preach the gospel in general—instead of the pride-feeding trash of free will, creature services, and fleshly sanctification, their pulpits would ring with Immanuel's power to save, and the efficacy of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, and the Old Testament, in all its types, shadows, figures, and metaphors, which are full of Christ, would be opened, and explained to the edification of the church, and the glory of the bleeding Lamb. What delightful views the spiritual or believing part of the Jewish nation, had anciently of their promised Messiah! With what vehemency of soul they expressed their desires to see him in the flesh, and though they died without receiving the fulfilment of that especial promise of his coming, they died in the faith: that faith, by which they saw, through their sacrifices, the offering up of the Lamb of God, in whose blood they were purified, and rendered acceptable to the God of Infinite Purity!

III. We shall now consider, to what degree such a person has thus purified himself. He is superlatively pure, as pure as God himself; "even," saith the scripture, "as he is pure."

1. As the obedience and righteousness of Christ are imputed to his people, they are made the very righteousness

of God in him! and as that righteousness is an immaculate and everlasting righteousness, it is impossible that they should ever come into condemnation, or that the shadow of a spot, to adopt Watts's phrase, should ever be found in them. This they apprehend by faith, and rejoice in Christ, "the Lord their righteousness," laying aside all fleshly confidence!

2. As their sins were imputed to Christ, all their sins of every description, and he bore them on his own body on the tree, drowning them in the depth of the sea of his atoning blood, there can be no imputation of sin and guilt to them: thus cleansed they are pure from sin, as angels of light, yea, pure as Christ is pure!

3. All that he possesses as their Covenant Head, they possess: his wisdom, strength, holiness and beauty, for the beauty of the Lord their God is upon them: who "beautifies the meek with salvation" Looking with eyes of love and delight upon his, divinely decorated bride, he thus affectionately addresses her: "thou art all fair my love there is no spot in thee!"

3. They are made perfect in love; loved by their covenant Father with the same love wherewith he has loved Christ: they are precious and lovely in his sight, who hath chosen them *unto holiness*, and accepted them in the Beloved.

5. They possess purity of conscience: not through any thing they have done or performed, but the Holy Spirit daily leads them out of themselves to Jesus, applies his blood, gives a sense of pardon and reconciliation to God, and bears witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God.

6. They possess purity of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, saith the Blessed Jesus, for they shall see God." This is the new heart which God hath given them, and in which he hath put his fear, and shed abroad his love; and it is with this new heart, that they believe unto righteousness, and worship the Lord in spirit and in truth!

With this new heart they pray, and daily contend with, and fight against the corruptions of the flesh.

With this new heart, they love God, and take an holy pleasure in his delightful ways.

7. They possess purity of hands, according to the

promise, " he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger:" these are the hands of the new man, the hands of faith which handle the word of life, embrace the precious promises, and do all things to the glory of God !

8. They possess purity of *feet*. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of Christ: with the iron and brass of the love and *faithfulness* of their God, leaning on which, they walk through persecution, temptation, and tribulation, trampling on the old serpent with triumphant confidence in Christ Jesus their Lord, who is the same yesterday, to day and forever! And in whom they are now, and to all eternity *pure* and *spotless* in the presence of an unsearchably Holy God!

Then the aggregate of my answer is, that the soul, graciously indulged with *hope* in Christ, looks *out* of itself, and from every *external* performance; even from every act of *spiritual* worship, (though intrinsically excellent) to the atonement, and righteousness of Christ; embracing him, by that faith, which ascribes, *holiness unto the Lord*.

Thus, accepted in Jesus, the *beloved*, the *saved* sinner, appears with holy boldness before God, " not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith!" and in which he shines, with a purity, that renders him " *pure as God is pure.*"

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

Was Melchisedec a type of Christ, or was he Christ himself? If only a type of Christ, what is intended by his being " without Father, without mother, &c.?"