

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XXXIX.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1824.

Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν καὶ Χριστῶς.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1824.

QUESTION.

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.?"

SOLUTION

THIS is a subject on which some good and great men, have widely differed in their respective opinions; and among others, which are too absurd to mention, two opinions have principally obtained: namely, those stated in the question; which form our present enquiry. My mind has been perfectly satisfied and tranquil for many years, respecting the person of Melchizedec; not on the ground of any author I have read, or exposition which I have examined; but, by a particular attention to the scriptures, which on all occasions, and especially in every theological disquisition, ought to be the grand arbiter to which we submit, with a cheerful and thankful acquiescence. To the sacred scriptures I shall principally appeal, which I am persuaded will defend and justify me, in the sentiments which I am about to offer to your serious examination, in my answer to a question, which is highly conducive to the honour of our covenant God, and our farther establishment

in the truth of Christ. And without any additional observations, as introductory, the subject shall have our immediate attention. And I answer,

I. That MELCHISEDEC was NOT Christ.

1. For Christ is said to be made an HIGH PRIEST for ever after the *order*, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν according to the *order*, or *manner* of Melchizedec ; (Heb. vi. 20.) and I am certain, it calls for no argument whatever, to convince sound rationality, that an *object*, and another *made* in the *order*, *form*, or *manner* of that object, are two distinct objects. Consequently, Christ and Melchizedec, must be *two distinct persons*. The former GOD, never manifested in the flesh, till born of the Virgin ; the latter, “ a man,” who was, for many years, one of the Canaanitish kings, in the time of Abraham.

2. He is spoken of as a *perpetual* priest, in contradistinction to the Levitical priesthood. Verses 5, 6 : “ And verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tythes of the people, according to the law, that is of their brethren, though *they come out of the loins of Abraham* : but he, whose *descent is not accounted from them*—remark, *not accounted from THEM*, received tythes in Abraham, and blessed him that had the *promises*.” The sons of Levi, who were a succession of hereditary priests, received tythes, “ according to law,” but Melchizedec, who was the only priest of his order ; for he is without *descent or genealogy*, in the priesthood, received tythes of him who had the *promises* : and was in that case, strikingly typical of the gospel high priest, Christ Jesus : the only great high priest of our profession. Here we see a beautiful distinction between the *legal* and the *gospel* priesthoods. The *legal* had a regular succession of priests ; but we acknowledge one Great High Priest alone, under the gospel ; who receives tythes of none, but those who, like Abraham, “ *have the promises*,” and who is our priest for ever after Melchizedec’s *order*—an *only priest*, not a priest by *descent* ; he was preceded by no *father*, succeeded by no *son*—but “ *without father*, and without *mother*,” in the priesthood, he remained a priest *perpetually* : in like manner, our blessed Jesus, is a priest for ever, pleading the virtue of his own precious blood, till his ransomed ones are all brought to glory !

3. Though we have not an account of his *natural* parents, which, perhaps, is providently hidden, purposely to strengthen the *type*; it does not argue that he must be Christ! if so, we might conclude, that the king of Sodom, who also met Abraham, must have been Christ also; for we are equally as uninformed of his parentage. Neither have we any account whatever, in the whole narrative, of either *father, mother, brother, sister, son, or daughter!* nor of any genealogy whatever, of any one of the heathenish kings of Canaan: for they were not, it seems, like the seed of Abraham, in the habit of recording and preserving their histories and genealogies: and therefore, it would be rather wonderful, if we had any detail of the parentage of the "*man,*" Melchizedec, king of Salem, a city of Canaan.

4. Though destitute of his *genealogy*, we have circumstantial evidences enough to satisfy every unprejudiced mind, that he was a *man*, who dwelt on the face of the earth; not an angel, nor pre-existing soul, but a mortal creature like ourselves, yet distinguished by divine grace, and called to the execution of a sacred and singular priesthood, purposely to exhibit to Abraham, the *nature* or *order* of the more glorious priesthood of the Lord Christ, his promised seed: for,

First, I would calmly ask, have we any account of his descension from heaven, in any celestial shape or form; or any return, by a sudden disappearance? Is there any account at all that he was a *celestial* visitant? No, nor the shadow of evidence in the whole of the 14th chapter of Genesis, that he was a messenger dispatched from the skies! Even the very *human soul* of Christ! No, it happens unfortunately for the *pre-existerians*, that we have no account but of his *body*, and when they can prove that a body is a *soul*, we will believe, and not till then, that Melchizedec, a *man* like ourselves, was a pre-existing soul! Read the whole account impartially for yourselves, and you will be constrained to acknowledge that he was none other, than Melchizedec, king of Salem, a city built on mount Sion, and was graciously distinguished by a sacred priesthood, typical of that of Christ.

Second, Why did he meet Abraham? on what occasion? and in what company? He evidently met Abraham, in the first instance, on account of the decisive victory, he

had obtained over their enemies : for the apostle says, " he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him ;" and he met him in company with the king of Sodom, who also met Abraham, the conquering hero, to thank him for the signal victory he had gained. Hear the account. " And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter, &c." " and Melchizedec king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, for he was the priest of the Most High God." (Gen. xiv. 17, 18.) It is evident from this, that the two kings accompanied each other, and had both, at the same time, an interview with Abraham : when Melchizedec, being priest, as well as king, blessed him on the happy event, and blessed the Lord in his behalf ! Can you imagine any thing more preposterous, than the human soul of Christ, going with the king of Sodom, to hail the return of the conquering Abraham ! but awfully preposterous as it really is, it is the unavoidable consequence of the doctrine, that MELCHIZEDEC was the soul of Christ :

Third. Abraham pays tythes to Melchizedec. And he pays them too in the presence of the king of Sodom, who endeavours to prevent him, upon a consideration, that the goods were his dear earned property : " And the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, Give me the persons, and take the *goods* to thyself:" and Abram's reply, sufficiently proves that at the same time, that he paid a *tenth* to the king of Salem, he returned to the king of Sodom, his property, retaken from the invaders, whom Abram had destroyed. " And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand, unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread, even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich : " &c. Had Christ himself been present, let me ask every devout Christian, who knows what the enjoyment of his presence means, Would he have so far neglected the SPIRITUAL Melchizedec, as to have held this conversation about worldly goods in his divine presence ? I am sure, every devout Christian, is warmly zealous to answer *no* : No ; the world, and all men are banished from the place, and Christ alone has the whole attention ; the heart, the soul, the love, the worship, the overcoming adoration, when he

reveals himself unto a believer as he does not unto the world!

But Melchizedec was evidently there, when the goods were divided; and he himself partook of the tenth of the spoils, as priest of God, and received them too! Then it was evidently Melchizedec, king of Salem, a well known city on earth, and not our great Melchizedec, who is king of the Jerusalem above!

Fourth. He is KING of *righteousness*, only by the *interpretation* of his name, which interpretation clearly shews, that he was but a type of Abram's God, who was not then incarnate, and who without any interpretation, is "The Lord our righteousness," and by that righteousness, he governs us as our supreme and absolute monarch: according to the prophet's prediction, "A king shall reign in righteousness."

Fifth. He was king of *peace*. But how? intrinsically, the prince of peace in his very person? Surely not, but only by the interpretation of the name of the city, SALEM, of which he was king: here we have again, an indisputable demonstration, that he was not the Great Author of our peace, who obtained it by his atonement, but the type of him who was to come.

Sixth. The blessing he pronounced upon Abraham, which in this discussion is worthy of our attention, proves very satisfactorily, his inferiority to Christ. "And he blessed him and said, blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." But does he presume to be the possessor of heaven and earth himself? Which he ought to have done, had he been Christ, especially upon this particular occasion: for by a precious Jesus, "All things were made, and without him was not one thing made that was made: all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him;" but Melchizedec does not presume to possess such power, nor to bless Abraham with *salvation*: but goes entirely out of himself, in pronouncing his benediction and points him to the *most high* God, and then adds, "And blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand:" it is strikingly evident, that he takes none of the power nor glory of Abram's deliverance and victory to himself: but ascribes

them to the most High God: In fact, in the pronounciation of his blessing, he said no more in substance, than any gospel minister might, with scriptural propriety, pronounce upon a *spiritual assembly* of God's children.

Seventh. From all the historical circumstances related of him, he was a real man: a king and a priest, and his place of abode Salem, where he swayed the regal sceptre over a part of the Canaanites. The account given of him by SUIDAS, whose excellent work stands high in the estimation of all learned men, is worthy the attention of my readers:

“ ΜΕΛΧΙΣΕΔΕΚ. *Melchisedec, Sacerdos Dei, Rex Chananæorum. Is urbem in monte, quæ vocatur Sion, condidit eamque Salem nominavit, quod idem est, ac Ειρηνοπολις i. e. Pacis-urbs, urbs pacifica. In qua, cum regnasset annos 113 obiit justus, et virgo, i. e. per omnem ætatem castus, et conjugii expertus. Ideo verò dictus est expertus genealogiæ, quod prorsus non sit ex Abrahami semine: sed ex genere Chananæo, et ex detestando semine ortus. Quamobrem etiam genealogiæ honore caret. Neque enim decorum fuisset, decessisset, eum qui summæ justitiæ, compos esset, conjungere cum summæ injustitiæ genere. Quamobrem etiam hunc et pater, et mater carere dicunt, &c.*” (*Suidæ, Ed. Porti: 1619.*)

That this passage may be generally read, I will give a translation, as *literally* as I can:

Melchizedec, a priest of God, a king of the Canaanites. He built his city in the mount, called Sion, and which he denominated Salem; which is Ειρηνοπολις, the city of peace, the peaceful city. In which, when he had reigned 113 years, he died a righteous and chaste person:—that is, throughout his whole life, he was pure, and altogether unacquainted with marriage. And on that account, is said to be destitute of genealogy. Because he descended, not from the seed of Abraham but from the race of Canaan, rising from that detested seed. For which cause he is without the honor of genealogy. For it would not have been decorous, it would not have become him, who was a partaker of the perfection of righteousness, to intermarry with a race of the perfection of unrighteousness. On which account also he is said to be without father and mother.

Eighth. You will perceive, from the above excellent quotation from *Suidas*, that he, not being of the seed of

Abram could have no Jewish genealogy, and thus most singularly called to purity of soul in Christ, and to the priestly office, he was so graciously separated from all his own people, the abominable Canaanites, that he could not even intermarry with them. But called out from among them, he stands alone, as the servant of the most high God ; and has, in that exalted sense, no genealogy, no *kindred at all*. For he renounces them all for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, his great and exalted antitype.

II He was a type of Christ.

1. In that he blessed Abraham. All the blessings of Christ and the blessings in Christ rested on Abraham and his promised seed, the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles, before the law of Moses was given; even before the foundation of the world. The promise was not to seeds but to thy seed, that is Christ, that he should have the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And those who possess this faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

2. In that he was a priest of the Gentiles. Our Jesus has not confined his love to his once favorite nation the Jews : but he is our high priest, and shall be for his salvation to the ends of the earth.

3. Typical of Christ, as by the *interpretation* of his name he was *the king of righteousness* : Our Jesus is not only so by name, but by obedience, and his own divinely intrinsic holiness ; having obeyed in our stead and so completely offered his own blood for the atonement of our sins that " we are complete in him : " and can sing individually :

" I other priests disclaim,
And laws and offerings too ;
None but the bleeding Lamb,
The mighty work could do :
He shall have all the praise, for he
Hath liv'd, and lov'd, and died for me."

CENNICK.

4. Typical of our Incarnate God, as by the interpretation of his city he was king of peace. It is remarkable that *Salem*, was built on Mount Sion one of the mountains of Jerusalem. And we know that in Sion God hath commanded his blessing even, life for evermore. When we enter Sion spiritually through the gates of Immanuel's righteous-

ness by precious faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: and walk about the beloved city telling the towers thereof, making our comfortable remarks on her strong fortifications, and rejoicing that "glorious things are spoken of Sion the City of our God!"

5. Typical of Christ as a priest for *ever*. Who was established from everlasting; who has loved us with everlasting love, brought in an everlasting righteousness for our justification, blessed us with an everlasting pardon and promised us everlasting life: consequently we rejoice in glorious hope of an everlasting salvation.

III. What is intended by his being without father, without mother? &c. I have in a great measure, already answered this part of the question, but will make a few additional and explanatory observations.

1. Without father in the priesthood. The *eldest* son, in the Levitical order, was high priest; the other sons were merely priests: but Melchizedec had no father in the priesthood, from which he *derived* any hereditary right or claim to the office.

2. Without *mother*: on her side he could have no claim or pretension whatever, for she was a *Canaanite*.

3. Without *descent in the priesthood*, or rather without genealogy, having neither predecessor nor successor.

4. Without beginning of day; the Levites were consecrated at a certain time, but he had no particular beginning in his priesthood.

5. Without end of life. At the death of a Levite, any proper person succeeded him, but he was a perpetual priest without succession.

My answer is then, that Melchizedec was *not* Christ himself, but a striking type of Christ: and that his being said to be without father, without mother, &c. clearly intends, that he was without predecessor, successor, kindred, and genealogy in the priesthood.

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XL.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1824.

Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πανί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1824.

QUESTION.

“ *What is Christian Patience?* ”

SOLUTION

ACCORDING to its common acceptation, the word *patience*, is so totally opposite to that which I daily experience in my own heart and conduct toward God, that no person could have been called upon for a description of it more *practically* inadequate than myself. But I am encouraged by the distinguishing and dignified epithet, by which it is introduced this evening to our particular notice: The querist not only asks, “What is patience?” but “what is Christian patience?”

That patience, which in combination with other graces and virtues, shines conspicuously in the CHRISTIAN, who is the subject of renovating grace, and distinguishes him from all other characters upon the earth. The patience of the Christian, the humble follower of the *meek and lowly* Lamb, who hath left us an example that we should follow his steps. PATIENCE of an exalted and superior excellence, which, while it brings the sinner submissively to bow before the gracious throne, and to acquiesce in the will of heaven, exalts his ennobled soul with an animating ex-

pectation of the complete accomplishment of the purposes of divine love in his salvation, for which he *waits* with a magnanimity of mind; that comfortably supports him in all his tribulations. It is a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. Yet be it observed,

1. That it is not dastardly *cowardice*—a slavish fear of the creature, which would lead the Christian, if not to a renunciation, certainly to a keeping back the truth, lest he should give an OFFENCE to those, on whom he considers himself dependent. *Patience* and *cowardice*, are diametrically opposite. *Patience* knows how to suffer loss, rather than yield to known error; she is truly heroic in the interest of Christ: and shone eminently in the apostle, when he declared, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” He would endure any affliction, rather than shun to declare, give up, or be ashamed of that gospel, the power of which he felt in his own soul. He withstood Peter to the face, for he was to be blamed, and declared to the Galatians, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that which I have preached, let him be accursed.” And all this, perfectly consistent with that PATIENCE, which, animated and encouraged by FAITH, will endure the heaviest afflictions for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Patience then is not a servile cringing to the creature; a bowing to worldly interest; a passive submission to that which is contrary to the gospel of Christ, to obtain lucrative ends! No, genuine patience is too nobly born to practice or endure such mean things: she is the offspring of the God of all patience: and while enduring persecutions and tribulations with persevering courage, saying with the apostle, “*none of these things move me,*” that is, from the truth, nor with a disposition to fly from it for safety, or for aggrandizement, she with warm zeal defends the honor, dignity, majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can endure that which is unworthy the Christian, who is taught to renounce the world with its smiles and its gilded and hurtful toys, and to take up his cross, and follow the Lamb of God whithersoever he goeth.

2. Neither does patience consist in an unfeeling heart, an heart altogether unmoved at the sufferings of other per-

sons. A poor, little, narrow, unexpanded mind, or a mind perhaps, incapable of sympathetic expansion, that has no feeling, no kindness, no affection but for itself. Wrapped up in itself, its own interest or gratification, is alone studied, and that end accomplished, is the summit of its wonderfully extensive wishes! I hope that I am endued with patience sufficient, not only to bear the infirmities of the weak, but also to carry into practice, that part of the exhortation of the apostle—"forbearing one another in love, —for knowing as I do, the infirmities of the flesh, I look for imperfections in the children of God—but really, I have no common PATIENCE with the STOIC: he has my total dislike!—My disdain and contempt!

And yet, how astonishing! I have heard him denominated a very *patient man*, and a *mcek* Christian! (But who is that which, the professedly Christian world will not christianize now o'days!) they say he is so *patient*, that nothing *disturbs* him. No, nothing indeed! he is a stranger to the exquisitely keen, tender, and ennobling passions of feeling humanity: and added to that, his profession, without the possession of Christianity, instead of meliorating, does but harden, if possible, his obdurate heart!

But genuine *Christian patience*, has in her noble train of attendants, sweet pity, weeping sympathy, tender compassion, and soul-dissolving love! The Christian indeed, is so gloriously the reverse of despicable stoicism, that he "melts at *others* woes, and" "weeps with those that weep." Sympathetic tears are shed over the anguish of a suffering friend; nay, a distressed or afflicted stranger, or even an ENEMY, would have his compassion, and practically his soothing kindness, in the extremity of pain or suffering adversity.

"He sees the lacerated lamb of another's flock— it bleeds —his heart bleeds with it!" But how are these, which may be considered but the common feelings of a noble and generous mind, enhanced, strengthened, and carried to an immeasurable extent of *tenderness* where vital Christianity triumphantly reigns! The pattern of all patience was so far from *stoicism*, that he wept at the grave of Lazarus—shed tears in the presence of the Jews, and so admirably where the affectionate emotions of his soul exhibited externally, that they were constrained to say, "*Behold how he loved*

him;" a Christian and not love! a Christian and not weep at the afflictions of others! Impossible! Such a person cannot be the affectionate follower of the weeping and lovely Jesus.

3. But Christian patience, is,

First, founded on faith, love, and hope, according to the description of the apostle, "The work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope." The work of faith is to fight against unbelief, embrace the promises, and pray with fervency; the labor of love, to oppose the world, the flesh, and the devil, and get as near as possible to the best Beloved of the soul: and love does not labour in vain;—she is strong as death, and rises superior to all the attacks of her inveterate foes. "*Love never faileth.*" Hope, blessed hope, exercises PATIENCE, which waits for the coming, the interposition, and appearance of the Lord

Second. There are two words employed by the Holy Spirit, in the sacred Greek Text of the New Testament, to express Christian patience: The one μακροθυμία *lenitas*, *gentleness*, *smoothness*, from μακροθυμος, *longanimus*: *longus animo*. *Iræ tardus*. Long suffering; to suffer long without irritation of mind: slow to anger. Hence the apostle says, "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience, μακροθυμίας, inherit the promises." The promises are embraced by faith, and the Christian expecting, fully expecting their fulfilment, patiently waits, and with a *gentleness* peculiar to that sweet persuasion of soul, bears up under all his complicated and perplexing difficulties, enduring the cross with admirable fortitude, entering into the sweetness of the blessings promised, and reckoning like the apostle, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed. Thus Job, amidst almost unequalled afflictions, exercised long suffering for the promise sake, and said "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him—he knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job xiii. 15. and xxii. 10.)

Ye afflicted Christians, remember the patience of Job, and see the end of the Lord. He was delivered, and abundantly more blessed, than before he was afflicted, and the promise is still on record for your comfort, "I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me."

The other Greek word, is used by James, and by Christ himself, (James i. 4. Luke xxi. 19) *ὑπομονή* *tolerantia*, *expectatio*, *sufferance*, *endurance*, a bearing up under a burden—an expectation of deliverance out of trouble, and of the accomplishment of the promises of our God. Hence, James, “ Let *patience* have her perfect work.” That is, wait for the interposition of the Lord. And Christ, “ In your *patience* possess ye your souls.” That is, enjoy your souls in all their greatness and blessedness, as chosen, ransomed, and regenerated souls; precious to the Lord, and under his immediate and peculiar care; interested in all his precious promises, and which shall, in consequence, soon be delivered from every trouble and affliction!

Third. Patience is a resignation to the divine will, attended with a believing expectation of, and awaiting for its accomplishment. “ My brethren, (says James) count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, (*trials*) knowing this, that the trying of your faith *worketh patience*.” (James i. 2, 3.) Indeed, it would be impossible to exercise *patience* without *trials*, for we should have nothing to endure, nor without faith in the promises, for we should have nothing to expect. Therefore, saith the apostle, count it all joy, that you are tried; for the Lord therein, dealeth with you as with his sons; for what son is there, whom the Father chasteneth not? (Heb. xii. 7.) It is that sweet patience which waiteth for the glorious deliverances and blessings which the Lord hath promised. (Rom. viii. 24, 25.)

Fourth. It is the effect of *strong* confidence in God, proceeding from faith in his constant love, and the stability of his everlasting covenant. David called upon his soul to exercise this patience in the deepest distress: “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” “ Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart, wait I say, on the Lord.” Wait, as if he had said, on the ground of his never ceasing, never failing love. O how sweet it is, thus to wait, persuaded that the vision is for an appointed time, and that it will surely come; it will not tarry.

Fifth. We may very justly term it Christian heroism: as it outbraves all the tempestuous billows of the tremendous

ocean of tribulation, and lives, though in a furnace of temptation, and fiery persecution. It bears up and encourages the Christian not to desert his banners in the field of contest with his enemies, though all things seem against him. Faith says, "*I shall yet praise him,*" hope replies, I anticipate the glorious victory with delight; and enduring patience says, therefore, stand your ground: as you hope for that which you see not, then *with patience*, (take me for your companion) *wait for it.* (Rom. viii 25.)

Sixth. It is supported by warm and affectionate desires "The soul panteth for God, y a, for the living God."—(Psalm xlii. 2) And so insatiate is this thirst for the presence and enjoyment of the Lord, that it is absolutely impossible, that sin, unbelief earth, and hell, with all their united energies should ever destroy it; or that it should be ever satisfied, or cease to exist, till Christ is revealed, and formed in the soul, the hope of glory.

It is a waiting, with the most ardent affection, for soul deliverance and clear manifestations of the *love* and *mercy*, blessing and salvation of the Lord. David on the subject thus expresses himself: "I waited *patiently* for the Lord, and he inclined his ear and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and he set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." (Psa. xl. 1.) In a horrible pit of bondage, and in the miry clay of nature's corruptions the poor soul cries out for God; and with hatred to his dismal situation, and unfeigned love to, and longing after Jesus, she *waits patiently*, expecting deliverance. And that deliverance shall be seen of many, saith David, (of all who are taught of God) they shall fear with a filial fear, and shall trust in the Lord; singing the same new song, and rejoicing that they are built upon the rock on which the feet of David were set: Christ and him crucified; joying in his eternal divinity, and blood-purchased salvation: in that sublime triumph, "the Lord liveth and blessed be my rock, and let the *God of my salvation be exalted.*" For him hath God exalted at his own right hand as a prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And this *patient waiting*, is not confined to the soul in legal bondage, but is felt and

enjoyed by the established Christian in every season of darkness, trial and distress.

Seventh. The Lord has graciously appointed all our tribulations for the promotion and exercise of our patience, that we may not rest in our present enjoyments but look for future and far greater blessings, which he has in store for those who love him. Which is beautifully described by Paul in Rom. v. 2—4 “By whom we have also access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh *patience*, and *patience* experience and experience hope, &c.” Tribulation finds work or exercise for *patience*, long suffering, or the enduring of affliction, and *patience* witnesses by a rich *experience*, the support of grace and the sweetness of the promises, to console and cheer the soul in the trying hour: and this blessed experience reanimates the soul with reviving hope of great deliverance, in the divinely appointed time, which hope is bold and valiant; and maketh not ashamed, because the love of God, is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

Eighth. To this *patience*, or waiting for the coming of the Lord, the subjects of grace are particularly exhorted, as a very superior part of practical Christianity, and one of the most God-glorifying exercises of the soul. “Be *patient*, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath *long patience* for it, until he receive the early and latter rain; be ye also *patient*: stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (James v. 7, 8.)

The husbandman endures a long and dismal winter, in which, the earth produces no fruit, and when the seed time arrives, he sows in *hope*, but must wait for the former and latter rain, to fructify the earth, under the vernal and more propitious beams of the sun; in like manner, we must endure a winter of severe cold, and terrific storms, waiting for the showers of divine love and mercy, and for the genial and fructifying beams of the “*sun of righteousness*,” who will soon “arise with healing in his wings.” Then shall we reap all the boundless benefits and blessings of his love, and rejoice in him with “the joy of harvest,” or as one who taketh great spoil. Be ye not therefore, weary in well

doing, wait patiently for your Lord, "for in due time, ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

Dear Christians, *wait* for the coming of Christ, for your deliverance: may he help you to carry into blissful exercise his sweet exhortation, "*In your patience, possess ye your souls.*"

We are also exhorted to be patient one with another, and toward all men. (1 Thess. v. 14.) And especially as the elect of God, to put on tenderness, compassion and forbearance. With the children of God, there are TWO eminent and powerful incentives to the practice of CHRISTIAN PATIENCE: *First*, a humiliating knowledge of their own infirmities, which will lead them to pardon and bear with the infirmities of their brethren. *Second*, a grateful sense of the *patience* of the Lord toward them; "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another: forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man has a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (1 John iv. 11. Col. iii. 13.) If we lament the want of this spirit, may we turn the language of the Poet into prayer, to the Lord:

"The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive;
Exact my own defects, to scan
What others are to feel, and know myself a man."

GRAY.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

SIR,

Your elucidation of the parable of the TALENTS, recorded in MATT. XXV. is respectfully requested. Is the ONE TALENT to be considered as the gift of grace? If so, how is it possible, for the person who once possessed it, to have it taken from him, and given to another? Your compliance will greatly oblige,

Earith, Kent.

J. A.

doing, wait patiently for your Lord, "for in due time, ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

Dear Christians, *wait* for the coming of Christ, for your deliverance: may he help you to carry into blissful exercise his sweet exhortation, "*In your patience, possess ye your souls.*"

We are also exhorted to be patient one with another, and toward all men. (1 Thess. v. 14.) And especially as the elect of God, to put on tenderness, compassion and forbearance. With the children of God, there are TWO eminent and powerful incentives to the practice of CHRISTIAN PATIENCE: *First*, a humiliating knowledge of their own infirmities, which will lead them to pardon and bear with the infirmities of their brethren. *Second*, a grateful sense of the *patience* of the Lord toward them; "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another: forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man has a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (1 John iv. 11. Col. iii. 13.) If we lament the want of this spirit, may we turn the language of the Poet into prayer, to the Lord:

"The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive;
Exact my own defects, to scan
What others are to feel, and know myself a man."

GRAY.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

SIR,

Your elucidation of the parable of the TALENTS, recorded in MATT. XXV. is respectfully requested. Is the ONE TALENT to be considered as the gift of grace? If so, how is it possible, for the person who once possessed it, to have it taken from him, and given to another? Your compliance will greatly oblige,

Earith, Kent.

J. A.

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XLI.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1824.

Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1824.

QUESTION.

Is the ONE TALENT to be considered as the gift of grace? If so, how is it possible, for the person who once possessed it, to have it taken from him, and given to another? as recorded in MATT. XXV.

SOLUTION

IN attempting to comprehend the intention of our Lord Jesus Christ in this parable, it will be profitable for us to keep in view the nature of parables in general, and especially of those in the New Testament, spoken by Christ himself. Then let it be observed, that we should consider the object designed for exhibition, or the subject for illustration—which being ascertained our next consideration should be, the most prominent constituents of the object or subject, parabolically presented to our view: and then, looking at the most material parts of the PARABLE, by a comparison of those parts, with the constituents of the subject, or object intended, we shall find such a suitability in the one, to illustrate the other, as clearly to discover the intention of the parable. Such an agreement between the principal constituents of the parable, with those of the sub-

ject ; such a beautiful adaptation to, and fitness of the former with the latter, that we must conspicuously and convincingly behold the chief end and design of the speaker in the parable. For instance, in this before us, we first enquire, what subject did our dear Lord intend to introduce and illustrate ? He himself informs us, “ *The kingdom of heaven* :” that is, his own kingdom on earth ; the gospel dispensation, and the formation of a kingdom with spiritual persons, who should even on earth, sit together in heavenly places in him, bowing to that sceptre of love which he should sway over their immortal powers. His intention being thus known, we farther enquire, how are the principal parts and characters in the parable, illustrative of “ *the kingdom of heaven*,” or the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the extension of his gospel, with the sweet savor of his lovely name to the ends of the earth ? Which is for our particular examination, this evening, in compliance with the request.

One remark more on parables, may be of service to you ; we are not to look for a *perfect* agreement between all the collateral, or smaller branches of the parable with the subject intended ; but between the leading, more important, and principal parts ; which being in unison with the chief constituents of the subject, display the main intention of the speaker, to an indubitable certainty.

I am more especially enquired of, concerning the ONE TALENT, whether it is “ the gift of grace ;” and if so ; how it can possibly be taken from its recipient, and given to another person ? I am not at all surprised, that such an idea should puzzle my *enquirer*. An idea, so replete with inconsistency and falsehood ; so contrary to the gospel plan of salvation : and so distressing to sinners, who know the plague of their own hearts !

However, before we attend to the whole of the parable, I can positively assure my enquiring friend, that the gift of grace is NOT intended by the ONE TALENT ; for it was taken AWAY from him who had it : whereas, “ the gifts and calling of God are without repentance :” he never takes away, nor repents of giving, those gracious blessings he confers upon his people ; neither is it possible that the work of grace begun in the soul, by the Holy Comforter, should be destroyed, or ever eradicated : for he “ *will carry it on to the day of Christ*.” The Lord himself declared, concerning

Mary, that the good part which she had chosen, *should "never be taken from her,"* and he has as positively said, concerning every regenerated soul, "Whoever 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)

" Enough my gracious Lord,
Let faith triumphant cry,
My heart can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die !"

The child of God shall never perish ; the work of grace in his soul, is that sweet bud of divine love, that shall expand with the full blossom of felicity in eternal day !

We will come now, to the explanation of the parable ; begin it, and go deliberately through it ; looking unto its great Author for spiritual understanding. Let us be as particular in the examination of every sentence, as a *lawyer* in perusing a *will* : or as counsel in the examination of an indictment ; scrutinizing every word ! The self-righteous, read the word of God, under the idea of performing a *duty*, and run over chapter after chapter, without understanding or enquiring after its spiritual signification. Not so, the child of God, he reads his Father's will, to discover in it the immensity of the riches of his grace, and enquires the real meaning of the terms in which he has recorded it, that he may not be deceived, but become more abundantly confirmed of his interest in his fatherly affection. So may we, under the Divine guidance, read and examine this important parable, enquiring after the *mind* and *will* of God.

Matt. xxv. 14. "*For the kingdom of heaven, &c.*"—The gospel dispensation, the kingdom of Christ on earth : which is not of this world ; but a truly spiritual kingdom ; which by the power of the gospel is COME unto us. And is established,

FIRST, In the soul by the Holy Spirit. "*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink—it does not consist, in outward, legal, and ceremonious observances—but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" The strong bolts, bars, fetters, and massy doors in the heart against Christ, and which binds down and imprisons the sinner in darkness and wretched slavery, are broken by the Holy Spirit—they snap and fly asunder at his Omnipotent entry into the ransomed soul—Ignorance, unbelief, enmity against God, self-righteousness, the world and the powers

of darkness, that held the sinner fast, must now give way to an unspeakably greater power. Divine light leads the way—the law in its spirituality, and sin in its exceeding sinfulness, are seen—life attends, and the convicted soul sinks at the foot of mercy, under the sentence of legal death; but love points to the cross on Calvary, and Jesus, weltering in blood, says, look unto me and be you saved—the sentence is reversed: the bleeding Immanuel says, LIVE; as your sins were imputed to me, and I have atoned for them all; completely atoned for them; my obedience is considered your obedience, and my *death* is your *life*!—Look up to me, poor sinner, and live! Faith looks, embraces the mighty Saviour, the conscience is purged in his most precious blood, and with blessed assurance, the soul cries, “My Lord and my God!”

Thus, the kingdom of heaven is established within him, which is *righteousness*, even Christ’s righteousness, who, as a king, reigns over him in righteousness: and peace, the most tranquil, and felicitous effect of justification in Christ: and *joy*, for the sinner now *rejoiceth* in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh!

Second. The kingdom of heaven, or the gospel-church, is composed of sinners, that are thus brought to Jesus, who governs them by shedding abroad his love in their hearts; whom they love, for the great love, wherewith he hath loved them, and with the most faithful loyalty delight to obey his commandments: and loving one another, for his sake, they keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Such is the kingdom of heaven among men; the coming and establishment of which, is evidently intended, and strikingly illustrated in this parable.

2.—“*is as a man travelling into a far country, &c.*”—“*After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckon with them.*” (verse 19.) This is the principal and governing character in the whole parable. A man of wealth, a nobleman, with a retinue of servants at his supreme command. Then, as *the gospel dispensation*, under the title of “*the kingdom of heaven,*” is evidently intended, it is an easy matter to discover that no other character than Christ Jesus our Lord, is here figuratively represented. As the Lord, the governor of all worlds, and by whom they were made. The sovereign of the skies,

who has "power over all flesh." With all the riches and treasures of the earth, at his command: for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof:" Who hath said, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills;" whose prerogative it is, as a sovereign, to dispose, distribute, and divide among the children of men, the things of this life, according to his good pleasure, without consulting, or being accountable to any of his creatures! And who as a mighty Saviour, has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and the vast immensity of divine love and grace!

"*After a long time—he cometh.*" We have here a striking view of the coming of Christ in the flesh. What a *long time* after the promise, that he should bruise the serpent's head—after the promises made to Abraham,—to David, and others, that in their seed all the nations of the earth, should be blessed, was it before he made his appearance! "Prophets and kings desired, it long, but died without the sight." Age succeeded age, generation succeeded generation; and century after century expired, without the appearance of the promised Messiah, the blessed Jesus, God manifest in the flesh! How ardently did the Old Testament saints pray, and how patiently did they wait for their promised Redeemer—but "died in faith, not having received the promise!" At length the time, the day of salvation arrives, and the *great monarch* of the skies makes his appearance in our nature, and in our world! But not in the pomp and splendor of earthly kings: A stable is the birth-place, and a manger the cradle of the HOLY CHILD! the Son of God! as WATTS sublimely expresses it,

"Jesus, the God, whom angels fear,
Comes down to dwell with you,
To day he makes his entrance here,
But not as monarchs do;

No gold, nor purple swaddling bands,
Nor royal shining things;
A manger for his cradle stands,
And holds the King of kings!"

3. *He calleth his own servants, and delivereth unto them his goods.* They were *servants*, remember; not his *sons*, though as I shall have to observe, that some of them, are

in a spiritual sense, *sons* of God, yet they are also *servants* serving in newness of Spirit. As his *servants*, they were typical of all the nations of the earth; including also God's favorite nation, the Jews: all the inhabitants of the earth, on whom, in some way or other, Jehovah hath bountifully conferred gifts: for "he sendeth his rain down on the just and on the unjust." They are all his own servants, his own creatures, at his command, and among whom he hath distributed the gifts of nature, and the good things of his munificent providence!

4. And unto one he gave FIVE TALENTS. A *talent* was a weight of about 125lbs: also "a sum of money, different in different periods of time, and in different countries." The latter is here intended. We must now enquire who this servant with five talents parabolically represents? From the nature of the parable I do not hesitate to say, the Gentile nations in distinction from the Jews. For this servant improves his talents, while the servant with *one talent* is idle, wicked, and slothful: thus Christ shews the superiority of the Gentiles who had only the *talents of nature* to the stubborn Jews, who were distinguished from all other nations by possessing the *one*, the *only one* the *choice* talent, of God's word, with all its connected and manifold blessings! They possessed the *five* talents of nature—the *five* natural powers of the soul, but had no revelation: yet they so employed those as to excel the Jews. *He that received the five talents, went and traded with the same and made them other five talents.*" His *trading*, his diligence in business, typically expresses the activity and diligence of the Gentiles, with the talents which they naturally possessed, to obtain more: that is so to improve the gifts of nature that by an accumulation of knowledge to their natural, they might add acquired abilities; or to their *five talents* of natural, they might add *five talents* of acquired understanding; and which according to the parable, they accomplished by their indefatigable industry. Paul bears testimony to their ardent pursuit of wisdom! "For the Jews, saith he, require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom," (1 Cor. i. 22.) And profane history, especially that of Ancient Greece and Rome, affords us sufficient information of the astonishing progress they made, and the wonderful and distinguishing eminence to which they ascended, not only in the liberal arts and sciences,

but also in their most celebrated schools, in ethics and the strictest morality. But alas! assiduously as they employed their natural talents, without the Bible, that volume of God, they remained totally ignorant of him. "The world by wisdom knoweth not God." To the *Athenians* the most *enlightened* Gentiles then in the world, Paul thus addresses himself, "ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." (Acts xvii. 22, 23.)

Yet the conduct of those morally enlightened people, is in the parable produced by Christ himself, as a condemnation of the rebellious Jews, who with the GIFT of God's word and ordinances, were at his coming, sunk lower in wickedness, hypocrisy, indolence, and Pharisaic superstition. As evidence of the fact, hear him in other places, holding up the Gentiles, who were not favored with his word, as superior in conduct to his own people, who had so long been indulged with that distinguishing privilege:

The men of Ninevah, saith he, shall rise up in judgment against and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jona, and behold a greater than Jona is here! Thus he accuses them, this generation, of their national impenitence and rebellion against the Son of God! Whom they must have known from the prophecies which were in their possession to have been the promised Messiah! "and thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day."

As if he had said, they were left to perish in their ignorance, but you, with the light of *revelation*, and in the very presence of the Messiah, who has proved his eternal power and Godhead by his mighty work still remain a people of *national impenitence*, more hardened than even Sodom, who had not your privileges, and in blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, are guilty of crimes, unparalleled, in the most abominable nations of the Gentiles.

5. "To another, two" (talents.) Though smaller in number, still of infinitely greater extent and value than the Five. For by this SERVANT are figuratively discerned the

poor and afflicted people among the Jews—" behold, saith the Lord, I leave in the midst of thee (JERUSALEM) a poor and afflicted people, but they shall trust in the name of the Lord." They had the two talents of *revelation* and *regeneration*. And though in the parable they are spoken of under the figure of a *servant*, they served in newness of spirit, and worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness; these few believers received the Lord Jesus at his coming: " the common people heard him gladly;" to whom he said, enter the joy of your Lord; enter into my gospel kingdom here, and afterward into my kingdom of eternal glory!

6. " To another ONE" (talent). That is, an only one; a particular and distinguishing gift: the word and ordinances of God, which were confined to the Jewish nation for many *centuries*, and which at the coming of Christ they had "hidden in the *earth*." Buried and covered over by their false interpretations, carnal commentaries, pharisaic superstitions and diabolical hypocrisies: Hence Christ told them, that they had taken away the key of knowledge, and shut up the kingdom of God; not entering in themselves, nor suffering others, who were so inclined, to enter in.

7. " *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents.*" Thus the word of the Lord was taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles: according to the awfully pathetic address of the apostles to that stiff-necked and gain-saying people; " Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the WORD OF GOD should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles!— And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed."

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

What is the state of that Christian that cannot come nigh unto God, and when will God be found of him, as recorded in Psalm xxxii. 6.
