

# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

## EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XLII.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πανί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

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LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1824.

### QUESTION.

*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.*

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### SOLUTION

THE question, as well as the scripture on which it is founded, strongly implies, First, That man is naturally far from God, ignorant of him, and a total stranger to divine grace.

Second, That God's peculiarly favoured people, "who sometimes were far off, are made nigh, by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13.) "Know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of his countenance." (Psalm lxxxix. 15.)

But the Lord is pleased frequently, to withdraw himself from them; to answer his own all-wise purposes, in their humiliation, by their afflictions, and the more conspicuous displays of his grace and mercy, love and power, in their deliverances. The *indulged yet tried* Christian, like David, rejoices, that his "*mountain stands firm,*" and triumphs, that he "*shall never be moved.*" But the Lord hideth his face, and his "*soul is troubled.*" So delightfully

sweet is the enjoyment of the divine presence ; so replete with joy and peace ; and in that celestial season, so gloriously victorious is the believer over sin, earth, and hell ; so dissolved is his heart with the tender mercies of the Lord, and so overcome with the charms of Christ Jesus, that he says with Peter, at the transfiguration, " It is good to be here." To him, every bitter thing seems sweet, and every enemy has his bold defiance. How delightful to him, are the word, the ways, and the worship of God—" Ways of pleasantness and paths of peace." He dwells in Bethel, the house of God, and the name of the place is to him, Jehovah Shammah, for the Lord is most graciously there ; revealing his love, opening the secrets of his covenant, repeating his promises, and unfurling the blood-stained banner of the cross, to the poor sinner's increasing and unspeakable joy!

He is ready to persuade himself that this heaven upon the earth, is to continue till he is removed to the heaven above! That he shall go on his way, rejoicing in permanent and unmolested peace. But lest he should be exalted above measure—lest he should forget what a sinner, he is *internally* in his *old man*, that the law of sin is still in his members ; lest he should forget his dependance alone on Christ, out of himself, for salvation, the Lord withdraws from him the light of his countenance, and leaves him to the thorn in the flesh, and the buffeting of Satan's messenger. Darkness of mind, hardness of heart, vanity of desire, vileness of thought, and "*all manner of evil concupiscence*," (Rom. vii. 8.) constitute solid ground for the accusations, threatenings, derisions ; or for the enticements, temptations, and persuasions of the Satanic messenger! O how distressing his state! He cries to the Lord, but he stands aloof from his bitter complaints. He laments with the church, " By night on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth : I sought him, but I found him not." (Sol. Song iii. 1.) " My Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me!" And with the Psalmist, " Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in his anger shut up his tender mercies?" In such circumstances, whatever some may say of believing and rejoicing when we please, I am

confident there is no getting near unto him: "When *he shutteth* up there is no opening, whether it be done against nation or a man only:"

In answer to the question, I shall attempt a short and biblical description of the **WATERS**.

Waters are figurative representations of the most important and excellent blessings, as well as of the most painful exercises of the tried Christian.

1. The glorious gospel of the blessed God, for its cooling, refreshing, and satiating effects, is denominated **WATERS**: freely flowing down from mount Calvary. Thus Isaiah proclaims it: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the **WATERS**: and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." (Isaiah lv. 1.) And indeed, sinner, it will cost you more than any proud Pharisee was ever yet willing to give for it: for you must part with all that you have, to buy the gospel field. All your goodness, holiness, and pretendedly meritorious duties and sanctity, esteeming them as dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. And if I am not egregiously mistaken, it will cost you your reputation in the religious world, should grace lead you to be faithful to conscience; God, and truth, in defending free, sovereign, unmerited, and undeserved love (the substance of the gospel) against the abominations of Arminianism, and the doctrines of Popery. Nevertheless, fear not; take Solomon's advice, "*Buy the truth, and sell it not.*" Whatever the world or the devil may offer, never part with it. The man that can give up one grain of truth for the sake of a benifice, or to escape the cross, or to shun indigency, the common companion of the gospel—the man, who in any way whatever, deviates from the truth for **MONEY** sake, serves **MAMMON** and not **GOD**! and is strikingly characterized by the apostle, as one of the worst **IDOLATORS**, "*Whose GOD is his BELLY, who minds EARTHLY THINGS!*"

But I hope that I am now addressing those, who have felt the power of the gospel, and love it too well, ever to renounce its doctrines for the world, or relinquish a profession, a bold and heroic profession of it, to escape the cross. I believe I am addressing those, who "*with joy, draw water out of the wells of salvation,*" and who can say,

concerning the "joyful sound," that as "cold WATER to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." For when the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them, I, the God of Israel will not forsake them." With this promise, you are encouraged to seek the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Water is a beautiful emblem of the Holy Spirit's work in the soul.

"He that believeth in me, saith the great Redeemer, as the scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." (John vii. 38.) He shall bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; for he is "born of water, and of the Spirit;" (John iii. 5) and possesses in his soul, the "Three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." (1 John v. 8)

3. Water is figurative of the *abundance* of GRACE, which the Lord pours down from his throne, on thirsty souls, who pant for Christ, as the hart panteth for the water brooks.— "There is no want to those who fear the Lord" The Lord has provided, not only amply, but abundantly for the salvation of his people. Surprisingly as sin has abounded—though it has abounded beyond all calculation—grace doth much more abound!—Hence our God has not left an inch of ground, poor sinner, for despair! Hear his gracious promise, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:" It shall be so abundantly poured out, that though the ground is dry, and calls for MUCH to supply its thirst, the WATER shall increase to FLOODS: O the overflowing of the love and grace of Christ poured forth by the Holy Spirit! as the Lord graciously adds by way of explanation of the figure: "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring."— (Isaiah xliv. 3.)

4. And WATER is not only a figure of the abundance of that grace, which bringeth salvation, but also of the boundless plenitude of blessings, necessary for our perseverance, through all our troubles and afflictions, and in spite of all our enemies, to the world of everlasting delights! Blessings confirmed by the oath of him, who hath said: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like

a *watered* garden, and like a spring of *water*, whose *waters* fail not." (Isaiah lviii. 11.)

5. The *qualities* of the *waters* already noticed, and which emblematically present to our view, such overspreading and freely flowing plenitude of grace, in the salvation of our souls by Jesus Christ, as well as such a never-failing abundance of new covenant blessings, deserve more than our common attention, and consequently, I cannot proceed to give an immediate answer to the question, till I have just *named* them, and though I can do nothing more than *mention* them, it shall not be omitted, as the very sound of the delightful epithets is calculated to administer pleasure to the believing soul. They are emphatically called,

First, **PURE**, (Rev. xxii. 1.) And he shewed me a **PURE** river, saith John, of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb." *Pure, unmixed love.* God is love, and it is impossible for him, without a change, which, awful to say, would undeify him, to feel the least anger or indignation against those, whom he hath loved with everlasting love! He is angry with their **SINS**, but can distinguish between their **SINS** and their **SOULS**. A parent loves the child, while he abhors his faults. The persons of God's people are ever dear, lovely amiable, and delightful in the eyes of his wonderful **LOVE**, in which he ever did, and will, rest to all eternity.

Second. **Waters of LIFE.** As they flow down the channel of the bleeding Lamb with life and salvation, and as they animate with spiritual life all that are led by the Holy Spirit, to live a life of faith on the Son of God.

Third, they are called by David, in Psalm xxiii. 2. **STILL** waters; in distinction to the roaring waves of divine wrath that roll with destruction, to inundate the ungodly world with eternal ruin! **STILL**, peaceable, calm, tranquil, with a smooth surface, reflecting, as in a mirror, the glory of God, the beauties, and eternal honors of Christ, in our salvation, and the admirable workmanship of the Holy Spirit, the Great Author of that peace of conscience, the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding. But it is time for us to notice the **GREAT WATERS**, in the passage alluded to in the question; an elucidation of which is more particularly, at this time, my incumbent duty.

1. Let it be observed. That in entering these deep wa-

ters, Christ himself takes the lead. Hear his complaint, by the mouth of David, "Save me, O God! for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink deep in mire, where there is no standing, I am come into *deep waters* where the floods overflow me." (Psalm lxxix. 1.) "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about, the snares of death prevented me." (Psalm xviii. 4, 5.)

Here we have a most pathetic and figurative description of the unequalled sufferings, pains, woes, and sorrows of the Heavenly Lover, the friend of sinners! whose exclamation to believers, is "Behold! and see, was ever sorrow like my sorrow!" And while, dear Christians, we look on him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and are in bitterness, as one for his first born; yet we rejoice, that by his stripes we are healed; that he hath borne away our ungodliness to everlasting oblivion by enduring those pangs of hell in his holy soul, which we must have, otherwise, endured to all eternity!

But though the above passages, and many others, containing the same figurative expressions of woe, are *primarily* descriptive of Christ's unequalled sorrows, it by no means makes them the less applicable to the trials of believer, nor the less descriptive of the afflictions of their *tried* souls! I was once told, by a high doctrinal professor, that Christ had been in the DEEP WATERS for him, and that he wanted to know nothing about such deep waters EXPERIMENTALLY, that experience of such a gloomy description, was childish, and that he lived entirely on Christ! There are many such *high doctrinal* professors in our day, totally destitute of *experience*, and who despise that which they do not possess. To whom, I embrace this opportunity, of saying, We live on the fulness of Christ: we do not make a Saviour of either our painful or our pleasurable sensations of soul; but we believe, and know, and know it experimentally too, That "unto us it is given in the behalf of Christ, not ONLY to *believe*, but *also* to SUFFER for his sake." We not only know him and the power of his resurrection," but also "THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, being made conformable unto his death." "The Lord trieth the righteous." There are afflictions peculiar to the gospel, and let those who have the supercilious audacity to despise Chris-

tian experience, remember what they have read in Heb. xii. if they have ever read that excellent chapter, the 8th verse of which contains these decisive words, "*If ye be without CHASTISEMENT of which all are partakers, ye are BASTARDS, and not SONS!*" And how does the Lord chasten his sons? Various ways, but most commonly by hiding his face from them, and leaving them to walk in darkness, without a ray of apparent light! The *great waters*, then, in which Christians cannot come nigh unto God, are

1. The floods of ungodliness *within*, which overflow and inundate the believer in extreme wretchedness. He cries with Paul, "O wretched man that I am," who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Why does he thus lament? Because he is a slave to *practical ungodliness*, No! Be it known unto you, ye *accusers* of the brethren! That they walk more uprightly than all the Pharisees upon earth, for they walk by faith in Christ, yet while their conduct is amiable and consistent with the Christian character, the carnal passions of corrupt nature, create within them a very hell, and under the hidings of God's face, they cannot come nigh unto him. They pant for the light of his countenance, while "he hedgeth up their way as with thorns."

2. The floods of Satan's temptations. "The enemy cometh in like a flood," and tauntingly exclaims, "Where is now thy God." UNBELIEF gives an echo to the taunting language, and says, "Surely against me is he turned." Thus deep cryeth unto deep at the noise of his *water spouts*. The deep of the devils devices is answered by the deep of unbelief; and the deep of affliction, by the deep of distrust, murmuring, and rebellion against God!

3. I might now particularly enlarge on the floods of trials and persecutions without, but time would fail me: I consequently proceed to answer the latter part of the question. "When the Lord will be found," &c.

1. When the seeking sinner is brought to Christ for salvation, divested of his legality and *self-righteousness*.—When he has nought to pay, his Lord frankly forgives him all: according to the Psalmist's account, (Psalm cvii. 12.) "He brought down their hearts with labor, they fell down, and there was none to help, then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands asunder."

2. When they are led to look beyond all means, ordinances, ministers, and every other thing short of Christ, to him alone, for their pardon, justification, and acceptance with God; not but that it is well to be found in the use of means, and to esteem spiritual ministers, highly in love for their work sake: nevertheless, no dependance whatever must be placed upon them for deliverance of soul; that is the Spirit's work, who speaks of, and glorifies Christ alone. How beautifully the church describes this, in Sol. Song iii. 4. After going about the city, in the streets, and broad ways, and enquiring of the watchmen after him, whom her soul loveth, she tells us, "*It was but a little, that I passed from them, but I FOUND HIM, whom my soul loveth*" She passed by them all, and every thing else; her beloved was alone, when he revealed his love to her soul, and indulged her with the light of his countenance.

3. When afflictions have answered their intended valuable end. "When he hath TRIED me, saith Job, I shall come forth as gold." (Job xxiii. 10.) When the Lord, by these afflictive dispensations of his love, has sufficiently laid open the sinful, helpless state of the soul, he reveals himself afresh, and the sufficiency of his grace to deliver, appears so exceedingly conspicuous to the delivered captive, that he is led with increasing ardor, to worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to put no confidence in the flesh.

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QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

SIR,

*Was Adam aware of the consequences that would follow his partaking of the forbidden fruit? If not, what idea does Paul convey, when he asserts that "Adam was not deceived?"—*  
1 TIM. II. 14. I remain, your humble Servant,

J. E.



# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

## EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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XLIII.] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all.—COL. III 11.

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LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1824.

### QUESTION.

*Was Adam aware of the consequences that would follow his partaking of the forbidden fruit? If not, what idea does Paul convey, when he asserts that "Adam was not deceived?"—*  
1 TIM. II. 14.

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### SOLUTION.

I AM persuaded that the proposer of the question was not aware of the difficulty and danger to which I should be exposed, in giving him my answer. He did not particularly examine the context perhaps; for, on such examination, surely he must have seen, that it would lead me necessarily, and unavoidably to address the FEMALE part of my auditory, upon a most *delicate* and *tender* subject; their *dress*, their personally *adorning themselves*, or their outward *decorations!* Believing females, have in almost every age of the church, been characteristically distinguished by their genuine piety, love to, and zeal for Christ and his glorious gospel; the reality of which they have evinced by their kindness, tender-heartedness, and warm benevolence to the poor and afflicted.

Genuine Christianity has found them among the first promoters and supporters of her most excellent cause; and I am very sure that there is not the least declension in that

ardour of female zeal for the gospel of free-grace, even in this day of lamentable supineness, if I may form an estimate of the whole, upon the ground of my own experience, and within the contracted limits of my own immediate observation: for I have ever found those females, graciously *distinguished* by the heavenly calling, as remarkably and pleasingly *distinguished* by their readiness, and even eagerness to assist, to the very extreme of their ability, in the best cause on the earth; that cause, for the establishment of which, the world was created, and for which it is now spared!

While I take these female excellences into consideration, and on the other hand look at the question, I may tremble for myself: for I feel involved in a difficulty, from which, perhaps, I shall not be extricated with all that facility which is so desirable, to one who would not, on any account designedly give them an offence. †But, dear Ladies, I am encouraged by your love of truth and faithfulness, and by that generosity of soul, which I know you possess. Actuated by these, methinks, you are mentally saying, “Go on: discuss the subject consistently with the sacred Scriptures, and then, if any thing by way of rebuke or reproof, should fall upon us, instead of being offended, let us say with David, “*Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness, let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil.*”

You will see the necessity of my treating on the subject of female conduct and decoration, if you consider that the words on which the question stands, contain ONE out of TWO reasons, alledged by the apostle, for the necessity of urging that female discipline, which he had laid down at large, in the foregoing verses.

Then, the FIRST PART of my subject is, *A rule of conduct for those excellent females, who have found favour with the Lord, to be numbered with the faithful followers of the Bleeding Lamb.* On which, I shall treat, with all the candour, affection, and brevity in my power, as a person who is bound to declare the truth, without any equivocation, or mental reservation.

1. A GOOD WOMAN, possesses, and “continues in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety.” (verse 15.) She has *faith* in Christ, which worketh by *charity* or *love*: and

which *embraces* holiness, even the holiness of God: and produces holiness of *heart, life, and conversation*: ascribing *verbally* and *practically*, "Holiness unto the Lord," while the poor sinner sinks into nothing, at the foot of the bleeding cross, acknowledging with blessing, thanksgiving, praise, ardor and adoration, that Christ is all in all, in the great salvation of extraordinarily great sinners!

2. The ADORNING of themselves. Of this I believe, females are particularly fond, and to which they are, doubtless, naturally prone. And with us all, of both sexes, it is the fact: That a strong natural propensity to any thing, whatever, is sure to carry us to the extreme, except that mental bias is placed under some rational restraint, or kept in bounds by wholesome laws and regulations. The Holy Spirit, therefore, has been graciously pleased to give such a code of laws, especially to the female part of his subjects, that they may *ornament* themselves abundantly more judicious, and even more *advantageous to their personal charms*, than they could or would have done, had they been left, without so kind a check, to their natural thirst for gaiety, and such an excellent model for their general demeanor in the church of God.

And, Dear Ladies, in your behalf let me observe, that you are not forbidden to *ornament* yourselves, but directed to do it with discretion. It will be profitable to you, perhaps, and I am sure it will be fair on both sides, to go briefly and impartially through all the RULES and REGULATIONS.

1. *In like manner, also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.*" (ver. 9.) The females, anciently, were wont to dress *immodestly*: (totally unlike our British ladies) the apostle, was therefore, directed to give this very necessary caution to *believers*, against an imitation of this unchaste, and disgraceful conduct of the heathen women. Among the ancient Romans, even women who wore the garment, which they denominated the *ROGA*, were considered destitute of virtue and *modesty*, which was a long loose garment generally worn open. "It was made, says a learned author, commonly of wool, but according to the worth and dignity of the person; sometimes of coarser, sometimes of finer wool; as we may collect by that of Horace,

“ Mihi sit toga, quæ defendere frigus.  
Quamvis crassa queat.”

We must note with TOXITA, that no *woman of any credit*, did wear the Roman gown, but instead thereof, did use a garment called STOLA, from  $\sigma\tau\alpha\lambda\omega$ , signifying *demitto, quod usq; ad talos demitteretur*. Whence old poets, when they would point out to us, an infamous, or lewd strumpet, would term her “*mulierem togatam*.” (Godwyn’s *Rom. Antiq. Lib. 3, Sect. 1.*) I quote this passage to shew you, that even the *heathen*, who had not the gospel, reprobated *immodest dress!* and that the apostle does not condemn, or forbid that attire which is *ornamental* to the person of a female, but the *gay, vain, loose, and immodest* modes of dress, which instead of *ornamental*, (how ever fashionable) sinks the person who wears them, into disgrace and contempt, in the estimation of all persons of modesty and discretion. Modesty in the female character, shines brighter than the brilliant diamond, on the finger of the most accomplished personage, is a virtue of untold worth, of highest recommendation, and ought to be, and doubtless is, esteemed by every virtuous woman, preferable to life itself!

2. “*With shame-facedness.*”  $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\ \alpha\iota\delta\omega\varsigma$  the genitive of  $\alpha\iota\delta\omega\varsigma$  with, a sign of the ablative case; *with bashfulness, modesty, chastity*. Which does not imply that degrading shame, which is the painful effect of guilt, nor that *silent* timidity, proceeding from cowardice, but a becoming distance, united with an urbanity of conduct, in every way agreeable to the female character; which prevents an exposure to universal access, while it renders amiable, in the eyes of all persons worthy of attention, the general address and demeanor of the character, who is the subject of this short discussion.

3. *Sobriety*. With a steady and prudent conduct: with a conversation that becomes the profession of Christianity: and which is counter to all that we can possibly denominate giddiness, absurdity, and vain laughter, which Solomon has denominated *madness*.

4. “*Not with broidered hair.*”  $\mu\eta\ \epsilon\iota\ \pi\lambda\epsilon\tau\mu\alpha\sigma\iota\upsilon$  hair hanging down in nets: inconsistently disgracing, rather than decorating the face; occupying time, and attended with expence: the effects of senseless pride, and giddy vanity: but as women professing godliness, let neatness and

modesty direct a head-dress more becoming the Christian, who professes to be dead to the world, and a stranger to its disgraceful customs!

5. Or gold, or pearls, or *costly* array. These things in themselves are not sinful, neither can they pollute either body or soul: but they are costly, and the property so uselessly and vainly expended by believers, and that to their disgrace as Christians, might be employed in relieving the hungry poor of God's flock, or in the furtherance of his cause and interest in this world. How many pounds are spent in *vain shew*, that would, humanly speaking, cause the hearts of God's people to rejoice in seeing his church relieved, and her prosperity promoted. Besides, a superfluous decoration of the body, is an outward and visible sign of mental vanity and indiscretion. A lady once asked me, and a believing lady too, if pride consisted in dress, I answered no: but added, if I am travelling a journey, and through fatigue want refreshment, I am looking out for the sign of some INN on the road. I have the happiness to behold one at a distance. But that sign is nothing of itself, it is but an empty shew, yet it informs me that there is *refreshment within*. So gay and vain dress, though it is but an empty shew, is an *outward* sign of the vanity *within*, in that heart which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!

6. "*But (which becometh women, professing godliness) with good works.*" Which consist not merely in attending a place of worship once or twice a week, or in a dry round of duties, privately and domestically: but in zealously studying the prosperity of Sion, the comfort of God's poor children, and the glory of Christ in diffusing around the sweet savour of his delightful name.

7. "*Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*"

If we consider this, as we ought to do, the language of the Holy Spirit, we cannot but conclude, that we have plainly and decisively God's negative to all *female preaching*. The woman is modestly to learn in *silence*: not that she is hereby prohibited religious conversation: but she is not to take the public place of the man: and the two reasons, rendered by the apostle, are, **FIRST**, For *Adam was first*

*formed, and then Eve,"* and therefore let the man take the lead in *teaching*: And *second*, "*Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*"— This second reason, laid a foundation for the question, which I shall now answer.

1. Adam was certainly not aware of the consequences of the fall, neither has the phrase, "he was not *deceived*" any such an implication. For though he was not *deceived*, we are not told he did not *transgress*. Paul speaks to the contrary, in Rom. v. 19. "For as by *one man's disobedience*, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Adam disobeyed, sinned, transgressed, and fell dead in trespasses and sin.

2. But in the expression we are informed of the subtlety of the serpent, his malice against God, his determination to destroy and throw from his pristine happiness, God's noblest creature on the earth, man, and his serpentine ingenuity, in accomplishing his malicious purpose, which is worthy our attention. And let it be remarked,

FIRST, That he does not attack the man. He does not attempt to assail him with his deceptions. He was aware of the superiority of knowledge and strength: but,

SECOND. He assails the weaker, the more soft, gentle, and yielding sex, the woman, whom he immediately, directly, and completely deceives.

THIRD For he well knew the powerful ascendancy, which she had, and in this awful business, would obtain over the fond mind of Adam, a mind, no doubt affectionately wrapped up in the beautiful and amiable Eve: that takes the forbidden fruit, and presents it to her innocent husband, who yields immediately to her powerful persuasives.

FOURTH. Man is now sooner overcome by the fascinations of the female, and sooner deluded by her persuasive eloquence, than by any other power short of the power of God. Well then, might the apostle say, let her keep *silence*. And having been thus once deceived, let her never more be foremost, in matters between God and man, but let her, instead of taking the lead as a *teacher* of divinity, *learn in silence*.

FIFTH. Satan, now, frequently works by the same kind of instrument, in bringing ruin upon the temporal interests of men, as well as the swift destruction of their immortal

souls ! And also in the distresses and perplexities of the children of God ! Hear the language of God's word which ought to be attended to by all young men, for the promotion of their comfort even in this life. What a solemn moral caution, dear young men, is here given you, by the relation of a shocking incident ; and though the spiritual reader may say, that Antichrist, or the false church is intended, which I admit ; yet the narrative, has also, a moral intention and excellency : Prov. vii. 4. " Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister ; and call understanding thy kinswoman, that they may keep thee from the strange woman ; from the stranger which flattereth with her tongue. For at the window of my house, I looked through my casement, and behold among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a *young man* void of understanding passing thro' the street, near her corner : and he went the way to her house, in the twilight of the evening in the black and dark night : And behold there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart—so she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face, said unto him, I have peace offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows—therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee—With her MUCH FAIR SPEECH, she causeth him to yield with the *flattering of her lips*, she forced him he goeth after her straight way, as the ox goeth to the slaughter ; or as a fool to the correction of the stocks : till a dart striketh through his liver ; as a bird that hasteneth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life." I have transcribed the greater part of the narrative, hoping that the Number, may fall into the hands of some young men, to whom, under the divine direction, it may prove a timely caution, and a preventive to that immoral destruction of health, and pecuniary circumstances, which thousands of young men have foolishly brought upon themselves, followed by a premature and miserable death !

SIXTH. Thus, Adam was not deceived by the serpent but the woman, who by her enticements brought destruction upon herself, her husband, and all her posterity.

Let us conlude then, by observing,

1. That Adam, and all mankind in him, their head, fell dead in sin.
2. That his crime is imputed to his whole race.

3. That by his fall, man lost all purity and mental holiness, and every imagination of the human heart, has ever since been only evil, and that continually.

4. That all the miseries, woes, distresses, and awful calamities of mankind, are the effects, the frightful effects of his apostacy.

5. But O let us, who are of the household of faith, bless the Lord in songs of loudest praise, that we have redemption through the blood of Christ; and that though sin thus entered into the world, and hath so shockingly abounded, grace much more abounds, through a perfect atonement made for the transgressions of God's Israel, by the precious bleeding Immanuel, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

REV. SIR,

*I HAVE read, with some degree of satisfaction, THIRTY SIX numbers of your "Bible Criticisms," and as you have said that queries from the country, will receive attention, I have taken the liberty to ask, if consistent with your plan, for an explanation of the two following texts,*

ACTS VIII. 22. XVII. 30.

*The above texts are proposed for elucidation, because they are much used by the Arminians, as favouring their wretched views of the gospel, as I do not believe they have any reference to free-will in the Arminian sense of the word, and I do not clearly understand the meaning of the Holy Spirit in them, your thoughts on the passages, will perhaps, be acceptable to others of your readers and hearers, as well as to Your servant, for Christ's sake,*

Exeter, Oct. 28, 1824.

J. H. G.



# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

## EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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XLIV.] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all.—COL. III 11.

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LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1824.

### QUESTION.

*What is the intention of Peter, in his exhortation to Simon,  
in ACTS VII. 22.*

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### SOLUTION.

THE history of SIMON, the SORCERER, clearly as it is written, has laid a foundation, not only for much theological disquisition, but even for contentious disputation. Evidently occasioned by inattention and carelessness: for instead of reading his whole history; and tracing him through every part of the description characteristically, those disputants have generally confined themselves to the one particular exhortation, which I am now called upon to explain, as if the other parts of the narrative, had no kind of connexion with it. The ARMINIAN warmly contends, that he finds here an apostolical precedent, for his universal exhortation for the whole world, to get Christ, and receive his offered grace. The SEMI-ARMINIAN, or MODERN CALVINIST, flies to it for support, in promulgating his mongrel system of the *duty of all men to believe, with the faith of God's elect*. And though dead in sin, to pray spiritually, and lay HOLD of Christ! The High Calvinist, on the other side, says what-

ever might be the intention of the apostle, I am very sure that he did not intend to say any thing in support of either Arminian, or Semi-Arminian exhortations, for in that case, he would contradict the whole contents of those excellent epistles, which he wrote under the immediate dictation of the Holy Spirit! And this is the conclusion which seems to influence the querist, and the ground upon which he has called on me to attempt an elucidation of the seemingly difficult passage.

Inconsiderate of all contending parties, popular and leading priests, names and denominations in the religious community; and, highly as I respect the opinions and writings of men born of God, inconsiderate of them all, upon this occasion, I shall now attend, impartially to the whole history of SIMON, in order to come, under the divine blessing, to the real intention of Peter, in the exhortation.

1. SIMON, as a SORCERER, had such influence over the inhabitants of Samaria, prior to Philip's preaching there, that "they all gave heed to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God!" (verse 9.) An historic evidence of the natural blindness, and superstition of the human mind! Alas! how far is man fallen! How ignorant of the God who formed him, and how exposed to every diabolical deception! But on the other hand, what a glorious evidence of the preciousness, super-excellency, and power of the gospel! "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." (verse 5.) God accompanied his preaching, with his own Almighty power, and the scales of ignorance fell from their eyes, the bonds of superstition were burst asunder, the powers of darkness vanquished, are forced to give up their prey; "and the people with one accord, gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed; and there was great joy in that city." A city that had been in possession of the very powers of hell for centuries, and that was consequently, devoted to every frightful, abominable, and unclean enormity—a city, with inhabitants, so notorious for diabolical possessions that it became proverbial: hence the language, applied so

maliciously by the pharisees to Christ; “*Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil!*” And this very city, without their *seeking* it, is divinely visited with the glorious gospel. They did not send for Philip, he WENT down to them, graciously guided, directed, and attended, and the gospel, at once, does such miraculous execution, that it becomes a city, in which Christ is known, worshipped, loved and adored. Philip did not go with offers of grace, and exhortations to the performance of duties—but he preached Christ unto them: Christ in his incarnation, that stupendous stoop of love, “*God manifest in the flesh.*” Christ in his complete atonement and everlasting righteousness, the fountain of immeasurable grace, whence issues the pelucid streams of love and mercy, pity, and compassion, in the forgiveness of sins, and the eternal salvation of all, that are blessed with especial faith in him. These glad tidings, attended with the touch of divine love, caused joy unspeakable in their hearts. And that sacred fire burned so vehemently, that it reached from heart to heart, and burst out in one universal flame among the believers in that city, and they had great joy, such as they had never felt before; Samaria was illuminated with the light of gospel truth, and the pascal Lamb, with fat things, full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined, was a feast of savory meat, such as their souls loved. And such was the effect of this feast of love, that they were *baptized both men and women*. But no infants, for I think it is self-evident, that had infants been baptized, they would have formed by far the greatest number, and consequently the writer would have naturally said, *men, women, and children*. But he says, in order to be particular in the statement, *both*, not all *three*, *both men and women*. *Men and women* then, and those too believers, are the only proper subjects of baptism.

2. Among those, who embraced the gospel in Samaria, we find SIMON the *sorcerer*. “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” (ver. 13.) Now let it be here noted as ground for future argument, which I shall adduce: that Simon was a professed believer, and such was Philip’s opinion of his sincerity, that he baptized him, and he continued with Philip in gospel intimacy and friendship. And

let it also be remembered that **HE ALONE** was the object of Peter's address in this exhortation of disputed signification.

3. In the history of Simon, we are farther informed that after the arrival of Peter and John at Samaria, "when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostle's hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, "Saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, they may receive the Holy Ghost." By which offer he displayed extreme ignorance, pride, arrogance, and perhaps an avaricious disposition: for as he **OFFERED** money to the apostles, with an expectation that they would receive it, we may fairly conclude, that his intention was to make money of the gift, which he was so anxious to possess. But here was his great crime, in attempting to purchase the **GIFT** of God with money. Nor is it less sinful, neither does it display less ignorance and pride in the *Arminian*, to carry his pretendedly holy duties and filthy rags of righteousness, to purchase the grace and love of God. "For if a man would give the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned!" Salvation is of sovereign, never-to-be-purchased grace, freely flowing from God's throne, down the delightful channel of a bleeding Christ. The Arminians then need not be so tenacious in claiming this scripture, as it totally condemns their pernicious doctrines as I shall shew abundantly, by other corroborating scriptures.

4. We now take into particular consideration, the substance of the exhortation, **REPENTANCE**. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

Respecting *repentance*, then we will just glance at

1. The signification of the term in the New Testament. The word employed by the writer of the Apostles' Acts, in this verse, has a very determinate signification, and cannot be well misunderstood, *μετανοεω* 2 pers. sing. impera. mood of *μετανοειω post factum sapio*, to understand and perceive clearly, the nature and consequences of an action, after it is done. *Resipisco*, to return to a right understanding. "To come to one's senses." The theme of the verb is the sub-

stantive *NOOΞ mens*, the mind: hence the literal meaning of the word is, such a *change of mind*, as is attended with an understanding of that which is wrong, and has been done inconsistently, and is necessarily and naturally accompanied with a regret that it should have occurred, and a shame occasioned by the painful consideration of the disgraceful transaction.

It is a change of thought, an alteration of mind, after having determined upon, or transacted that which is inconsistent with rectitude, justice, and truth.

Hence we read, that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He alters not his mind, but having executed all the weighty matters of a sinner's salvation, according to the unerring counsel of his own will, he still rests in his love, and being of "*ONE mind, none can turn him.*" This proves, that Christ is the IMMUTABLE God, who has said, concerning the flock the Father has given him, "I will RANSOM them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: REPENTANCE shall be hid from my eyes." (Hos. xiii. 14.)

There are various repentances spoken of in the Holy volume; but especially three, which are clearly and evidently distinct from each other: and it becomes us, in order to understand this exhortation, to enquire which of the THREE is intended by Peter, when he says, "*Repent of this thy wickedness.*" Alter, change thy thought, "if perhaps, the thought, (the erroneous thought) of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Now it is evident that this change of *thought*, in Simon does not amount to that most important repentance, which is commonly denominated EVANGELICAL, for that is not merely a change of THOUGHT on one particular subject, but such a conviction of having been *altogether wrong*, as produces a godly sorrow, for the innumerable, and still multiplying iniquities of corrupt nature, and more especially as *evangelical repentance*, is not an act of the creature, but is

1. The gift of Christ, "whom God hath exalted at his own right hand, as a prince and a Savior, to give *repentance* unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 31.)—He does not SELL, for his gift is not to be purchased by any price whatever; but *gives* repentance; not unto the world

at large, but to Israel, who shall be saved in him, the Lord, with an everlasting salvation.

2. It is that deep and internal conviction of sin, with a detestation of it, which is the produce of *godly sorrow*:—“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” (2 Cor. vii. 10.)

3. It leads to God, with an humble acknowledgment of sin, guilt, and unworthiness; renouncing and abhorring self. Hence Job says, “I abhor myself and **REPENT** in dust and ashes.” Paul, in his public ministry, was testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and faith toward our Lord, Jesus Christ. He declared that the *repentance*, which is the gift of Christ led to God with brokenness of heart, and a penitent confession of sin. As witnessed by the experience of David, who cried unto God repentingly, “Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this great evil in thy sight.” Not as Cain, who said, “My punishment is greater than I can bear,” and went **OUT FROM** the presence of the Lord. Nor as Judas, “Who said, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood,” threw down the pieces of **SILVER**, and went out and hanged himself. Real repentance leads the soul to God, with humble confession, and self-abasing contrition.

4. It is a peculiar and distinguishing grant of God.—When Peter was declaring the grace of God, toward the Gentiles, on his first entry among them, it is said, “When they heard these things, they held their peace, (ceased their complaining of his going among the Gentiles) and *glorified God*, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles, **GRANTED REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.**” They did not say well done, ye Gentiles, who have now thought more seriously of your eternal interest, and have at last, come forward, and performed your *duty of faith*, but they *glorified God*, who, by the precious grant of repentance, had evinced his love to his elect among the Gentiles, as well as among the Jews.

5. Then it is evident that it is the repentance of God’s elect, confined to, and graciously conferred upon them by an holy and effectual calling: provable by the decisive language of Jesus, to the haughty pharisees, “Go ye, saith he, and learn

what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous"—they are not once invited; What then becomes of the *duty of all men to believe*? Why, it must on the ground of this scripture, fall, as a most abominably false doctrine—"but sinners to repentance:" they alone are invited, and distinguishingly called to REPENTANCE. (Matt. ix. 23.)

6. Over such repenting sinners heaven rejoices! "I say unto you, likewise, that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance." (Luke xv. 7.)

7. Truly penitent sinners gladly acknowledge, that repentance is the gift of God; gratefully confessing with Ephraim, "after I was turned, I repented," and still continue to pray, "Turn us O Lord, and we shall be turned, renewed as in days of old."

The *second* repentance, which I would beg your attention to, I may denominate a *national* repentance. Hencethe exhortation of the apostle to the Jewish nation: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, &c." i. e. *national sius*. (Acts iii. 19.) So Nineveh, as a city, repented in sackcloth and ashes, at the preaching of Jonah; but this has nothing to do with that repentance, which is unto eternal life.

The *third* repentance, is that of an individual, on account of the commission of any particular and heinous crime. Such was the repentance, to which Peter exhorted Simon, in the passage under consideration.

We must now seriously consider the object of the apostle's address.

1. Which was not a miscellaneous congregation, in a public sermon, but an individual in more private and particular conversation; and therefore it is very plain, that it can be no precedent whatever for universal exhortations from the pulpit, for carnal persons, to repent and believe in Christ, with the gracious repentance and faith once delivered to the saints, and to them only.

2. That individual was a high professor, who had been baptized by Philip, and in course, we have a right to look upon the address, as a reproof, such as any minister would give to a member of his church, who had erred from the truth, or been guilty of any crime to the dishonour of God

and his glorious gospel, which he professes to love! How inconsistent then to draw the conclusion, that all men are to be called upon to repent and pray, because Peter thus reproved a single individual in conversation, and that too, an individual, who was a professed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And added to this, the apostle exhorted him to repent of one particular crime—“*This thy wickedness—the thoughts of thine heart.*”—that the gift of God might be purchased with money! The crime was well known to Peter, and he rebukes him for the erroneous and wicked thought.

And though he exhorts him to pray, it was an exhortation to a professing individual, who as such, no doubt was in the habit of praying, and that perhaps, socially with the church of God: widely different to exhorting a body of men, professedly strangers even to the external exercise of prayer.

But now, perhaps, it may be said, after all, it was an exhortation given to an unregenerated man: for he is told in plain terms: Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter—and I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. To which I answer,

1. That by his having no part nor lot in the matter, Peter evidently did not intend that he had no interest in the salvation of Christ, for he gives him ground to hope, that perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him: but that he had no part in the apostleship, in the laying on of hands, in the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, which he wanted to purchase with money.

2. That though he was in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity, a fallen child of God, may in certain trying circumstances, be the same: but admitting that he was unregenerated, he was a professor on whom the apostle's reproof had such an effect, that

3. He *repented*, and said, “*Pray ye the Lord for me, &c.*” which certainly is the language of a child of God: and here the narrative ends; and who dares to say, that he is not now in the world of glory?