

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

XLV.] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1824.

Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all.—COL. III 11.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1824.

QUESTION.

*What is the intention of the HOLY SPIRIT in ACTS
XVII. 30?*

SOLUTION.

THIS is the second scripture which my EXETER QUERIST, in his friendly letter, laid before me for explanation : and which we will, by the help of our God, and with an eye to his glory, endeavour to take out of the hands of the Arminians, and place it in its proper situation ; that instead of its being employed as a tool in support of man's free-will, and self-righteous pride, it may, in unison with other precious portions of God's word, that more fully express his electing love, and his own *free will of grace*, toward his church, reflect his praise.

As this is a scripture which also leads us to a consideration of the doctrine of *repentance*, I shall endeavour, in order to avoid useless repetition, to go farther into that part of the subject, which I have denominated *national repentance*, and which is evidently *intended* in this notable passage of Paul's sermon, on *Mar's hill* ; which on account of its *universality* of expression, is not only played with by the Arminians, but has puzzled and perplexed, and may still be puzzling and perplexing to many of God's effectually called children.

I shall adopt the same method, as in the last elucidation ; for I know not a better method of obtaining the truth, than to enquire of every verse in connexion with that which we wish particularly to understand. Let us go on to remark, then, that Paul was a perfect stranger in Athens, where he was only waiting for Silas and Timotheus, without any intention, it seems, of preaching to those idolators. But “his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.” (vere 16.) This was evidently a divine impression of mind, that he might preach to the effectual calling of some of God’s elect, who were dead in sins, and buried in superstition, among those idolators. The sequel will most pleasingly inform you of the success of his ministry, in this *first* and most powerful sermon to the *learned, accomplished* and *philosophic Athenians* ; who, without the gospel, were the miserable devotees of ignorant and slavish idolatry ! But the gospel enters, and under its blessed influence, they became as devoted to Christ, and him crucified for them, as they had been to their numerous gods of *silver, wood, and stone* ! Surely, when we read this narrative, we cannot but express our feelings in language similar to that of a celebrated hymn,

“ Fly abroad thou mighty gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease !”

But let us be assured that it is the *gospel of Christ*, and not “ *another gospel*,” which indeed, “ *is not another*,” as Paul says, by way of prevention ; for there are no other *glad tidings* for perishing sinners, but a crucified Christ : a *whole, complete*, and everlasting Saviour, who saves from *first, to last*, by grace, *unassisted* by any of the works, duties, or performances of the *sinner*, so gloriously washed in his blood, and arrayed in his righteousness !

The Church of Rome, a long time since, sent *Missionaries* to China, and Japan, to convert those idolatrous countries to Christianity : and what doctrines did their Missionaries preach ? No doubt the doctrines of that church, by which they were sent ; *free will and duty faith*. What success had they ? Let the state of those countries answer. God did not work by them ; he will never bless such doctrines. They might moralize some of the inhabitants : but they were presently ordered to depart ; and they returned home, only to detail the ineffectual efforts of

ARMINIANISM! Had they been successful those wretched *idolators* would have been converted only from one species of image worship to another. And let it be here remarked—though I am assured the remark will give offence, in this day of Missionary zeal; but I cannot conscientiously avoid it—that though this country, at a vast expence, have sent, and are still sending Missionaries abroad, their endeavours to convert the heathen will be equally as unsuccessful as those of the Roman Catholics, except men are sent, who are BORN of God, and are decidedly against the doctrines of men, and for the *doctrines* of Christ! God never sends a man with a lie in his right hand. He never sends a man to preach the duty of all men, to believe the gospel, nor to turn the grace of God into licentiousness, by most unrighteously and awfully declaring, that it leads to sin!

We are certainly indebted to the Roman Catholic Missionaries, for some very entertaining accounts of the geography, manners, and customs of those countries, they visited: and so we may be to the present *British Missionaries*, for like information: but alas! all such information, falls short of elating a believer's mind with the glad news of the promulgation of the gospel of *free grace*, and the extension of the Redeemer's empire, by the rich effusions of his love in the souls of sinners, who are taught, to make their "CALLING and *election* sure."

Paul at Athens was *successful*; for God was with him:—he was sent by no "*Missionary Society*," whatever, but carried there by a remarkable providence: and in like manner our God has sent, and will send his gospel where he has a people: that it may be like its glorious Author; "*a stone cut out of the mountain without hands*:" As Christ, the chief corner, foundation, and top-stone was cut out of the mount of everlasting love, without human aid, so he sent forth his disciples without purse, or scrip, and so he will to the end of time, work in such a way, that when the *head stone* of the complete, (and then in number) completed church shall be brought forth with *shouting of grace, grace*, unto it, the universal song of blood-bought Israel, may be, not by human might nor power, but by thy Spirit, O Lord of Hosts! our King and our God!

Our seeking thy face,
Was all of thy grace,
Thy mercy demands, and SHALL have all the praise;

No sinner can be
 Before-hand with thee,
 Thy grace is eternal, almighty, and free.... TOPLADY.

2. Paul disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, and with devout persons, and in the market, daily with them that met with him. (verse 17.) Which is an undeniable precedent for religious disputations, moderated by affectionate zeal for Christ, and conducted by scriptural evidences for his glory, as the only Saviour.

3. Certain philosophers of the *Epicureans*, and of the *Stoics* encountered him. They, as disputants took him on the various grounds of their established philosophical rules and maxims, but Paul, as on another occasion, "reasoned with them out of the scriptures." Let reason, Dear Christians, ever be subservient to revelation: for the former, is but corrupt and erroneous at the best; the latter unerring, "a light that shineth in a dark place, (this world and our hearts) and points to Christ the way to eternal glory! Happy indeed, is that man, who is taught with delightful content to abide doctrinally, experimentally, and practically, by that divine that incomparable volume!

4. The name by which the Athenians distinguished Paul is worthy our observation, because it is generally the nominal distinction of all the spiritual followers of Christ, and more especially of his truly faithful ministers. Some said, *What will this babbler say?* This *Σπερμολογος*, *garrulus*, a prating, talkative, verbose man: *Blaterator*, an idle, foolishly talking fellow: *Nugator*, a lying rogue. Such are the titles, the laurels, with which the world decorates the brows of God's AMBASSADORS of peace, the messengers of grace, and publishers of salvation! But why should they repine? If they have called the master of the house *Beelzebub*, what must the servants expect? If they have done these things in a green tree, what will they do in the dry?

5. But they not only insulted him with opprobrious names, but apprehended him and carried him before the magistrates at *Areopagus*, saying *May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest is?* The original text says, they brought him *επι τον Αρειον παγον* to MAR'S HILL. Yet our translators have very properly used *Areopagus*; for "*Areopagus* was a village near Athens, called Mars' hill, where was the judgment hall, or judicatory, for life and death."

And the *Areopagitæ*, were “ Severe judges, who sat in Mar’s hill, and passed sentence upon life and death.”

6. The general character of the Athenians is particularly stated in this chapter. (verse 21.) “ For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time, in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing.” (What a true picture of some of our London Professors!) They were desirous, through their natural and accustomed curiosity, to hear the apostle explain “ the new doctrine, which he had brought to their ears.” Not through love of truth, but as their manner was to hear, and then talk about some “ new thing ;” so now, whatever “ thing” it may be ; whatever doctrine, or whatever THING it may be who delivers it ; the *novelty* attracts, and the multitude of curious professors are after it. But in this, there was not then, neither is there now, any vital and experimental godliness.

It is worthy of our notice, that this character of the *Athenians*, given by Luke, is confirmed by one of their own poets. *Aristophanes* speaks thus of them :

Και τοι λογος γ'ην την Ηρακλεα πολυς
Επι τοισι κερειοισι καθημενων
Ος εξαπινης ανηρ γεγενηται πλουσι⊙.

They set in barber’s shops to hear all news, and to comment and make their observations, and that with a desire to deride those persons who were *made rich*, or sunk in their circumstances.

This spirit of enquiry into the circumstances of other persons, united with a propensity to misrepresent, is discoverable in the conduct of every person down to the present day : and is evidently a miserable effect of the fall among innumerable other effects, which we have to lament in ourselves as well as in our fellow men.

7. The apostle then stands up on Mar’s hill, and rebukes them in a most eloquent address for their idolatry and superstition, “ Ye men of Athens, saith he, I perceive that in all things, ye are too superstitious,” then he points out the various instances of their *superstition*, to which he had been an eye-witness, and in the most persuasive manner addresses them in behalf of the only true and eternal God, whom he loved and served declaring, forcibly and energetically matters of infinite importance, and among them we find the

words on which our question is formed: "And the times of this ignorance, God winked at: but now commandeth all men, every where to repent." On which we shall briefly descant, as follows:

1. It cannot imply every individual of the human race, for there are millions of human beings already dead and gone into eternity, to whom the Lord never sent his messengers of gospel grace and peace.

2. It is said, "And the times of this ignorance, God winked at, &c." If there ever was a proof of *reprobation*, I am sure this must appear most decidedly one, with all who impartially read the word of God. For the term does not, imply a winking at their sins, so as to pass them by unpunished: but that he did not look upon them with an eye of mercy and grace, but left them to live and die in their ignorance, sins, and superstitions! O how distinguishing the love and grace of our God! You who know him, praise and bless his holy name, for your *election* in and redemption by a precious Christ: and glorify the Holy Spirit, who has so graciously manifested him to you, and in you, the hope of glory! He has not dealt so with all people, praise ye his name!

3. But *now*, saith the apostle in this gospel day, he *commands* all men, all sorts and conditions of men, every where in all the Gentile nations, to repent: to turn from their *national idolatry* and worship God, whom ye Athenians have pronounced, in one of your religious inscriptions, the "*UNKNOWN GOD*."

4. By "*the whole world*," and "*all men*" we are most commonly to understand the Gentiles, in contradistinction to the Jews. God having for many centuries confined his peculiar blessings to his favourite nation, sends his apostles unto the Gentiles, and commissions them to preach to "*all the world*," that is, to all sorts of people without distinction, but they were to preach the gospel to them. To *preach* it: not to *offer* it: and to preach the *gospel*, not *free will*, for that is not gospel: but salvation by a bleeding Christ: to preach it, and leave the Holy Spirit himself, to make the powerful application of it to the hearts of *convinced* sinners.

5. As a clear and decisive explanation of the terms, the "*whole world*," and "*all men every where*," I beg your attention to two corresponding and reciprocally explana-

tory scriptures : 1 John ii. 2. “ And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world ” Does John intend every individual of the human race, from Adam, to the last person of his posterity ? evidently not, for he would, in that case, contradict himself in his distinction between the beloved and elected children of God, and the wicked world : “ ye are of God, little children, and the whole world, lieth in wickedness :— But by the whole world, in the passage I have quoted, he intends all the elect of God among the Gentiles, which the second scripture, will sufficiently prove : John xi. 49.— “ Caiphas, being the high priest, that year, said unto them—that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not : and this he spake not of himself, but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in ONE, the children of God, that are scattered abroad.” John says, in his epistle not for OUR sins only—Caiphas says, and not for that nation only—but saith John, for the sins of the whole world ! and to explain John’s words, Caiphas says, that he should gather together in one, all the children of God, that are scattered abroad. So that by the whole world, as applied to salvation, we are very clearly to understand all the children of God among the Gentile nations.

6. The repentance then intended by the apostle, was a turning from their superstitious and idolatrous worship. So John the Baptist, and Christ himself, exhorted the Jews, “ Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”— The gospel dispensation is at hand ; therefore repent of your Jewish prejudices, and superstitions, and receive the gospel.

7. For theirs is an *external* reception, as well as an *external* rejection of the preached gospel, and in this sense, God commands all men, every where to repent ; where his gospel comes, to turn from their various idolatries, and embrace the Messengers of peace, sent by him, who hath said, “ Whosoever receiveth you, receiveth me.” And again, “ Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, shake the very dust off your feet, for a testimony against them.” This *rejection* of God’s faithful ambassadors and his gospel, will be an awful charge against that country,

city, town, or village, that has so awfully fought against God. The Jews, maliciously “put the word of God from them, and *judged themselves* unworthy of everlasting life.” They “*resisted the Holy Ghost!*” not in his internal and spiritual operations, as the Arminians vainly talk. For when he will so work, who can withstand his Omnipotent power! but they resisted him by their persecution of, and outward opposition to those *spiritual* men, who were taught of God to know, and to preach the things of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is carried on in the earth, by the power of the Holy Spirit;—consequently, they who persecute, and endeavour to prevent its success, are emphatically said, to “*Resist the Holy Ghost!*”

8. The gospel is an outward and providential blessing to the neighbourhood where it is preached: he who blessed the house of *Potiphar*, for Joseph’s sake, will confer his providential blessings on those who *assist*, instead of *resisting*, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The people who are wise enough to attend to the exhortation, “Touch not my anointed, do my prophets no harm!” will find their account in it providentially.

Reader, if you have a sound, experimental minister in your neighbourhood, *despise, neglect* him not: but consider it, even in an external point of view, as a blessing which God has conferred on the place, with an intention thereby to call home some of his elect.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

REV. SIR,

HAVING read occasionally, some of your judicious remarks on abstruse and difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures, I earnestly solicit an explanation of the following text:

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour: who will have all men to be saved.”—1 Tim. II. 3, 4.

I heard this text preached from, by an Arminian minister, and it has occasioned many doubts and fears in my wavering mind: An attention to this, will oblige,

Yours, in gospel liberty,

Woolwich, Nov. 8, 24.

X. X.

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

XLVI.] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1824.

Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

Christ all and in all.—COL. III 11.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1824.

QUESTION.

In what sense are we to consider 1 TIM. II. 3, 4. which declares that God will have all men to be saved?

SOLUTION.

TRUTH is not only benefited, and its beauties brought to light by investigation, but even *opposition* itself, which attempts to cover and hide her from our view with the dismal mantle of destructive error, seems by a perpetual and violent rubbing, to produce that beautiful polish, that clear, yet dazzling excellency, which excites the love and admiration of all that seek her prosperity, and places her in a situation similar to that of a well cut and polished diamond, which prior to CUTTING, laid in a crust, with all its beauties concealed from human view. How dear, how precious, to the spiritually instructed soul is sacred, *heavenly*, eternal, truth; that truth which maketh us free, more especially, when the sweet accents echo through our souls from the balmy lips of Jesus our divine lover: saying, with an emphasis peculiar to the affection of God, I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life! Buy the TRUTH, and sell it not! In the estimation of those who are thus led by the Spirit of TRUTH, into ALL TRUTH, so choice, so invaluable is every grain, every particle thereof, that they cannot, will not, shall not give it up, for he who called them by his grace,

has kindled in their hearts such a fire of HOLY indignation to error, and zeal for the truth as it is in Jesus, that they at the risk of their character, property, yea, even life itself, cannot but contend earnestly for THE FAITH, THE FAITH of God's elect—THE FAITH once delivered to the saints. They are decided for truth, with a determined and unhesitating decision, known and enjoyed only by those, who are taught of God. And suffer me faithfully to tell you that if you have one spark of genuine love for Christ in your souls, you cannot say, when a host of erroneous men, calling themselves divines, advance against the truth, as I have heard many say, "Let them alone, say nothing about them nor their errors." The awful language of dastardly cowardice! which we, who love Jesus cannot adopt. While cold hearted professors, are saying under the influence of *fleshly* religion, like David, in his *natural* affection for his rebellious Absalom, "Deal gently with the young man!" may we be roused with that holy zeal for Christ, which will, against all false doctrine, excite the cry of David's valiant captain: "Let all the kings enemies be as Absalom:" and with the zeal and valor of faithful Paul: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you—let him be accursed." O ye Christians! if the Lord be God—the God of all grace, power, and salvation—serve him; love, worship, and adore him alone! But if Baal—if an idol, if the old Pelagian idol, *free will, and human ability*, be God, then worship it. Be decided, and

" ————believe what you will,
Be all of a piece, either Whitby or Gill."

I am led to these introductory remarks by the Querist, who informs me in his letter, that he heard an Arminian preach from the text in question, which distressed his wavering mind. I must say, honestly, to him, that if he be, what he subscribes himself, "in gospel liberty," he had no business, whatever, to hear that *Arminian*, (admitting he knew him to be one) for it is giving them encouragement, and is a violation of God's command, "Come out from among them." Indeed, the *charge*, the solemn accusation of God, calls loudly for our Querist's attention, "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." (Psalm l. 18.) And let me add, that while the children of God, and

especially, those who are weak in the faith, will run after such preachers, they may expect to share in the fate of my Querist, to possess many "doubts and fears," and also "*a wandering mind.*" The Lord, in this respect, teach him, and teach us all to pray in the sweet lines of an hymn,

" Prone to WANDER, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, Lord take and seal it,
Seal it from thy courts above."

I advise those who know the truth, and love it, rather to read the Bible at home, than attend on *Christ-dishonoring* error! And if, dear Christians, you have a faithful gospel minister, do not leave him for strangers, however popular they may be: it is weakening your own church, discouraging your own minister, and eventually doing injury to the cause of Christ, which you are zealously desirous to serve!

But I am aware that the Question demands my attention, in answer to which we will observe,

1. That by ALL men, in this portion of scripture, it is evident, we are not, to understand the whole human race: for even the Arminians themselves, if they read attentively, the verses in connexion, and exercise common honesty, though against their own system, must acknowledge that the apostle intends

2. ALL CONDITIONS of men. For let it be particularly observed, as unquestionable evidence, that the apostle mentions two superior *conditions*, and leaves us to trace mankind upon the subject, from those the highest, to the lowest grade of rank "I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made, for ALL men; for KINGS and for ALL that are in authority."—(verse 1st.) And why pray for those great ones of the earth? Since the same inspired writer has said, "not many wise, mighty, or noble are called!" We may give this answer, that though not MANY of them are called, it does not exclude ALL, and as we cannot say, while they remain unregenerate, who will, or who of them will not be called, we pray for their regeneration, with submission to the Divine will. But take the apostle's reason for the exhortation to pray for kings, and it will serve to elucidate the QUESTION. Saith he, that we may lead, *a quiet and peaceable life*, in all godliness and honesty. He did not say that they

may be regenerated, but that they may be temporally blessed, and so wisely govern, that we may enjoy, we worshipping Christians, the benefit of their judicious government, and obtain their royal approbation, and protection, in assembling for the public worship of our God. Besides, the apostle wrote this epistle to Timothy, about A. D. 65. in the reign of Nero, 11th, one of those bloody persecutors; and foreseeing more awful persecutions of the Christians, he wished ALL men, who could pray, to pray every where, lifting up holy hands, that God would subdue their persecuting spirit, or give his *persecuted* people strength equal to their day. His second epistle to Timothy, was written in the reign of Nero 13, A. D. 67. before whom he was brought a second time, when he was ready to be offered up, and the time of his departure was at hand!--(Vide 2 Tim. iv. 6, 16.)

3. The command is evidently to pray for the effectual calling of God's people in every country, who are bought with the blood of Christ, as well as for their support and perseverance after they are called, to eternal glory. Christ himself has decided clearly every disputation concerning praying for the world at large, for he says very expressly, *I pray not for the world; but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* (John xvii. 9.) And I think we cannot follow a better example.

4. The *all men* are the ransomed of the Lord, in all the world: who "*were redeemed from among men.*" (Rev. xiv. 4.) and who shall, when all collected together, sing the new song which none but the Redeemed can sing. John beheld them in vision, and gives us the following delightful account of their *grand chorus*, "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood OUT OF every kindred and tongue and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, &c.*" This scripture ought to be decisive upon the subject, and I am persuaded it will be with all who know the virtue of Immanuel's blood; who know, and that by blessed experience, of the application of that blood to their consciences, that it takes away all sin; and consequently those for whom he died, cannot possibly perish.

5. All men in the great sheet of the everlasting covenant

let down to the earth, which Peter saw in a vision? and which was shewn him to remove his Jewish prejudices against the Gentile nations. Peter on the house-top, became very hungry and would have eaten, but while they made ready, he fell into a trance. And saw heaven opened, &c. (Acts x. 9.) The Lord was graciously pleased to indulge him with the wonderful exhibition of all his people of every nation, to prepare him to go to the house of Cornelius, as the narrative will inform you. The sheet was a representation of the covenant of everlasting love! Knit at the four corners: the four principle attributes of deity, concerned in the salvation of the redeemed: Infinite wisdom, omnipotent power, inflexible justice, and eternal righteousness, wrought out by Christ in his boundless love and mercy: or the *four* mentioned by David, which amount to the same, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" thus the covenant of love is upheld and supported to the eternal glory of all the divine attributes. But the contents of the admirable sheet now calls for attention; "Wherein were all manner of four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Four-footed beasts: *quadrupeds*, without understanding, wedded to the earth, *wild* beasts, ferocious, untamed, and ungovernable, mischievous; and creeping things; serpentine: a striking representation of man in his natural state: "earthly, sensual, and devilish." But notwithstanding, they are in the covenant, loved, chosen, and shall be called, in order to be glorified with their Redeemer for ever. "*And fowls of the air:*"—The people of God after calling; who ascend to him, as on eagles' wings. Peter was told to "arise, kill, and eat." who replied, "Not so, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."—And the voice spake unto him again, what God hath cleaned, that call not thou common." As if it had been said, and indeed, was said figuratively: vile as the Gentiles are, despise them not, but go and preach the washing away of all their sins in the fountain of Christ's blood: and after this preparatory visitation from God, he went and preached salvation to the Gentiles acknowledging the power of the conviction, which he had received from this vision: for on entering Cornelius' house he thus addressed them: "Ye

know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company or come unto one of another nation: but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." And we remark farther, respecting the vision, that "This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven" which shews clearly that the great sheet of the covenant of love, which from all eternity, contained the people of God of every nation, and every age, is in consequence of their election and adoption, let down thrice to the earth; **FIRST** in their redemption; **SECOND** in their calling; and **THIRD**, will be at their universal resurrection, when they will be all "*received up into heaven.*"

Now we come more immediately to the subject, that God will have all men to be saved: for this, saith the precious portion of scripture, is the will of God our Saviour—*God our Saviour*. I must avail myself of the opportunity, if it is thought a digression, before I proceed any further, in the given subject, to put in a word on the ground of this expression, in behalf of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who *wills* our salvation is the Saviour, then it undeniably follows that the Saviour is the Eternal God! Whose will is

1. His *eternal mind*: and as that must be ever unalterable, if he *will* the salvation of all and every individual of the human race, then they must, and will all be saved with an irrefrustrable salvation. "For who hath resisted his will? or who will ever thwart his gracious purposes?" Hear his own sovereign language: "yea, before the day was, I am he; and there is none that can deliver out my hand: I will work and who shall let it." (Isa. xliii. 13.)

2. It is a *sovereign* and *independent* will: he borrows no leave of his creatures either to be, or to act, but disposes of his own unmerited blessings of grace according to his good pleasure; as it is written, "I *will* be gracious, to whom I will be gracious; and *will* shew mercy, to whom I will shew mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) on which majestic declaration Paul says, "so then it is not of him that *willeth*, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.)

3. His will has issued *decrees* that must be available and minutely executed, because for ever irrevocable. Hence,

saith the apostle most sublimely: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after *the counsel of his own will*. (Eph. i. 11.)

4. The properties of this *will* are *good, perfect, and acceptable*. (Rom. xii. 2.) "The good will of him who dwelt in the bush." His *good will*, his gracious will and purposes *toward man*, in taking a people to himself, which is the proclamation his ministers are commanded to make; the *glad tidings* of good things which our translators have denominated *gospel*. The *perfect will*, in that it is unerring, and in the most beautiful harmony with infinite wisdom. Acceptable, pleasing in his sight and worthy the acceptation of all sensibly perishing sinners. His will is displayed

1. In our *predestination*. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the *good pleasure of his will*." (Eph. i. 5.)

2. In the *birth of Christ*. Angels shouted at his birth, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and **GOOD-WILL** toward men."

3. In the death of Christ. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the *will of God*, and our Father." (Gal. i. 4.)

4. In our *spiritual birth*. "Of his *own will* begat he us, by the word of truth." (James i. 18.) "Which were born not of blood, nor of the *will* of the flesh, nor of the *will* of man, but of God." (John i. 13.)

5. In our *sanctification*. Which is not of our procuring, but of the Spirit's creation, a new and perfect creature: and "this is *the will* of God even our sanctification:" for which we must give him all the glory.

6. In our *afflictions*. "He performeth the thing that is *appointed* for me," saith Job, "and many such things are with him." His *gracious will* is continually executing, and shall be executed in all our trials, however complicated and mysterious to us.

Luck, chance, and fortune, those *idols* of ignorant man, shall never intrude into his government, nor thwart, in the minutest circumstances, the counsel of HIS WILL. "Is there any *evil* (trouble) in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Is there any calamity that can possibly befall a city, a community, a family, or an individual, without the **WILL**

of God? But especially, let me ask you, who love the Lord, is there any affliction, whether of body or mind, which is not *divinely* and *wisely* designed for your real benefit?

However severe may be the pain, it comes under the immediate direction of eternal and paternal love; to effect that which could not be done, any other way: and in your deliverance, to glorify the astonishing wisdom, and omnipotent power of him, who, thanks to his holy name, has taken us under his own sole care, and affectionate attention! Who guides us with his eye, surrounds us with his everlasting arms, while his munificent hand supplieth all our needs; and who will, in the event, bring us out of trouble, that we may praise, and magnify his name!

“ His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour,
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”

7. In our *glorification*. “ Fear not little flock, it is your Father’s *good pleasure* to give you the kingdom.”

The all men, therefore, which God *wills* to be saved, are his elect in every nation and in every age, who shall be saved alone by the blood and righteousness of the precious Redeemer, and will ascribe their salvation for ever to his sovereign will, singing in extacies of love, “ Even so, Father, for so it has seemed good in thy sight.”

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To the Author of Biblical Criticisms.

REV. SIR,

I occasionally communicate with the Gospel Magazine, which with your valuable little Publication, form a phalanx of irresistible force—being the essence of that sacred truth, which I, (thank heaven) have been taught to venerate and adore. I take the opportunity of transmitting THIS, with a correspondence to the above-named publication. I received your last number on Tuesday, and was myself, as well as a numerous body of friends, highly gratified: and beg your attention to the following passage:

“ As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman, which is without discretion.” PROVERBS XI. 22.

And remain, Yours, &c.

Liverpool, Nov. 18, 1824.

A. W.

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

XLVII.] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1824.

Τα πάντα και εν παντι Χριστος.—PAUL.
Christ all and in all.—COL. III 11.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1824.

QUESTION.

What is the intention of the HOLY SPIRIT in PROV. XI. 22?

SOLUTION.

THE Proverbs of Solomon viewed only as MORAL maxims for the guide and government of human life, are entitled to the daily attention of mankind: as containing upon almost every topic, and in almost all circumstances, the most excellent rules, directions, advice, admonitions, and exhortations: suited to all ages and countries; and to every stage of life, from tender youth, to the man of grey hairs. Let the thoughtless Deist, who has the blasphemous audacity to call the Bible, that Holy Volume of God, IMMORAL! read *attentively* the Proverbs, and his common understanding must excite a blush at his own infidelity and *profanity*; and common honesty compel him to acknowledge, that at least, they excel in morality, all other moral rules; are so numerous, and contain such an astonishing variety, that a very superior wisdom, shines through the whole: and that they are abundantly calculated to accomplish all that is ascribed to them in their title: “*To give subtlety to the simple, to the young men, knowledge and discretion.*” (chap. i. 4.)

But with those who fear the Lord, they are not only read on account of their *morality*, and excellent directions in human life: they discover in them Solomon's wisdom, and admire it: yet it is theirs to behold a greater than Solomon, Christ Jesus, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom—Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; who has made them wise “To understand a proverb, and the *interpretation*, the words of the *wise* and their *dark sayings*.”

The words of our question, *morally* reprove the vain, and commend the discreet and mentally amiable female. While the world at large, are dazzled with the beautiful features and proportionate symmetry of figure in a handsome lady; who perhaps is made more vain in her conduct, by their admiring adulation, Solomon chides her vanity, and re-proves her admirers, by this strong figure: “she is as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout!” Why, because she is beautiful? No: but because she is without discretion:—Beauty, upon all occasions, and by whom, or in whatsoever displayed, must have our admiration: A FAIR, or BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, is the most exquisitely admirable workmanship of God among his creatures on earth: but we have to lament while we admire, that beauty has most commonly, for its attendant, detestable vanity! Against which, Solomon has thus very wisely put in his caveat, and painted female pride and affectation in their true and disgraceful colors. And, Dear Ladies, he points you, and more especially those among you, who profess godliness, to BEAUTIES that infinitely exceed those of your fair persons; you have personal charms, and we admire them, but if destitute of discretion, you are placed in a situation similar to that of a *jewel of gold*, (which still retains its worth, but is) *in a swine's snout!*

Study the beauties of the mind: those mental ornaments—those beautiful features of internal elegance—humility, a meek and quiet spirit, uprightness and sincerity of soul, and above all, DISCRETION, which shall guide you in all the walks of human life, and direct you so judiciously to demean yourselves, as to fascinate more by your admirable and useful virtues, than by all your personal enchantments.

A fair woman, with discretion, is doubly beautiful: she is as a jewel, not in a swine's snout, but in the admiration of

all virtuous, judicious, and wise men : and if blessed with a gentleman of such description for her husband ; she is as a jewel, thrice precious in his eyes ; which he locks up in the casket of his tenderest care, and carries in the bosom of his warmest affections. But how transcendently amiable, if she possess the power of godliness : “ Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” (Prov. xxxi. 30.) Her beauty will never fade : “ she shall flourish in immortal youth ;” for her charms are deathless as eternity ; they are the charms of Christ ; the beauty of her beloved.

But it is time for us to dismiss the morality of the subject and attend to its spirituality.

1. THE WOMAN. This is no uncommon figure in the Sacred Volume ; which is employed by the Holy Spirit, most graciously to convey to our comprehension, the great concerns of our salvation. The covenant of grace is said to be the mother of us all, (who believe) the Jewish church is called the married wife : but especially the whole church of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles as his bride, his beloved, the desire of his eyes, the delight of his heart, and the request of his lips, which has not been withheld from him by his Father, in the covenant of redemption. Concerning whom he says, “ There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one : she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.” (S. Song, vi. 8, 9.) Threescore queens—the nations of the earth : and four-score concubines—false churches : the family of the scarlet concubine that sitteth on many waters : and virgins without number—virgin souls espoused to Christ ; “ a great number, that no man can number :” yet saith he, my beloved is but one, the ONLY one of her mother, the covenant of everlasting love : numerous as those virgins souls are, they are all one in Christ, by that union in him, which is eternally inviolable ! She is the king’s daughter, all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold : the glorious work of the Spirit within, testifies her interest in the Great Redeemer, her beloved : whose golden robe of righteousness, she wears, and in which she shall shine with all the brilliancy of his royal bride to eternity !

But in this scripture, we have an account of a woman,

who is entirely without an husband ; ANTICHRIST, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.

Rev. 18.) And indeed, she is so fair and fascinating, that she is as a jewel of gold in their estimation. She is fair, beautiful, and agreeable to human nature, in her "meretricious arts of dress"

1. In the pomp and pageantry of her worship ; in her priestly robes, images, sacrifices, sacraments, and pretensions to divine power and infallibility : and with all she has so enriched herself, as to outshine the whole world, in external magnificence ! while the chaste bride of Christ, is clothed in humble poverty, and sometimes in the blackness of Antichrist's cruel persecutions, like her beloved bridegroom, has not where to lay her head !

2. In her doctrines how FAIR and plausible to carnal reason ! The power and natural ability of man, opposed to the power and ability of the Omnipotent Christ : The *beautiful* righteousness of the poor self-deceived soul—*beautiful* in the eyes of men, opposed to the perfect and eternal righteousness of God. The duty of all men to believe, opposed to the gift, and high *privilege* of especial faith, given only to the ransomed of the Lord : The pretended and *polluted sanctification of the flesh*, in which dwelleth no good thing, opposed to the perfect sanctification of the Holy Ghost in the soul, which is his workmanship, in opposition to the flesh, and is as pure as God himself is pure ! And so I might go on to notice more of her abominable doctrines which are to the dishonour of a precious Christ, and inimical to his simple, plain, and glorious gospel of free grace and bleeding love !

3. *Fair in her speech.* It is said of every one she deceives, "With her much fair speech, she caused him to yield." (Prov. vii. 21.) And Paul saith of her preachers ; "They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. xvi. 18.) And the people love to have it so : "who are crying prophecy unto us smooth things in the name of the Lord." A pretty, soft, elegant, and smooth address, avoiding every thing that would give offence to proud and self-exalting nature : smooth and gentle exhortations to certain *holy duties*, (to use their own words) by the performance of which, the poor deluded soul

is promised the divine favour. Such, O ye dissenters, are many of your popular Doctors of Divinity; and others, who are preaching free-will, in opposition to God's *determined* will to save his people, by his FREE and never-failing grace: who put *creature holiness*, in the place of God's holiness, and exalt the sinner instead of the Savior, by smoothly telling him, that he must put the *finishing* stroke to his own salvation. Hear the word of the Lord upon the subject, and if you must be angry, let it be not with me, but with the holy and faithful word of sacred inspiration. "For even your brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee, yea they have called a multitude after them: believe them not, *though they speak fair words unto thee.*" I am sure this description, and exhortation, were never more applicable to the Jewish church, than to the professing Christian church, in this day of universal error! O ye professed Christians, may God make you wise to attend to his faithful word of truth!

4. Yet she is denominated a *jewel of gold*, for she is so, for two reasons

First, the nations of the earth, hold her in such invaluable estimation, that she is their chief treasure: they are "drunk with her abominations."

Second. Because she has the treasure of God's word: yet being ignorant of its spiritual contents, her ministers corrupt it to their own destruction! For I must go on to notice that she is "WITHOUT DISCRETION." That is without an experience of the life and power of Christ in the soul. Which the true church of God, the jewel of Christ possesses.

1. "The *good* man (the subject of grace saith David) will guide his affairs with discretion," (Psalm cxii. 5.) The immortal affairs of his soul; he is made wise unto salvation; and as a poor ruined sinner, "*ordereth his cause before God,*" (Job ii. 3.) judiciously, wisely, and successfully. For instead of going with his own holiness or duties, before him, he humbly falls at his feet, and acknowledges that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing, while faith eyes the bleeding cross, and pleads salvation for the *alone sake* of the blood and righteousness of the precious, bleeding, suffering, risen, complete, and exalted Immanuel! *Ruined* sinner, go and do likewise; go, and fear no de-

nial. "Whosoever cometh unto me saith the Blessed Lamb of God, I will in no wise cast out."

2. The subject of grace experiences the sweetness of that precious promise. "*Discretion shall preserve thee.*" (Prov. ii. 11.) For his *judgment* in divine truth is so enlightened and confirmed, that he is thereby kept from *error*: and in time of trouble and darkness, from despair, by an assurance that the Lord will, in his own due time, bring him out of trouble, that he may praise his holy name. But of this discretion, Antichrist is entirely destitute.

We will now come to the comparison—"as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout."

1. A SWINE, in distinction from a sheep: "Ye believe not, said Christ, to the Pharisees, because ye are not of my sheep." He did not say, ye are not of my sheep, because ye will not believe—because ye will not perform your duty or ye might be of my sheep: but he tells them plainly they do not belong to his redeemed flock: neither can they, for the non elect never can become his elect, they are *swine*, and must and will remain so for ever.

2. A swine, under the law, was unclean, and the Jewish church was forbidden to eat its flesh: hence the complaint made against them by the prophet, "They eat swine's flesh, and drink the broth of abominable things." Solomon speaks of an *herd* of these unclean *swine*. "There is, saith he, a generation, pure in their own eyes, but are not cleansed from their filthiness." Christ's sheep are washed in his blood, but this generation knows nothing of its cleansing in their own consciences.

3. A *swine* wallows in the *mire*. Hence Peter:—"It is happened unto them, according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed (on the outside, like a cup or a platter) to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 22.) In the mire of ungodliness, as well as in all the filth of those FILTHY dreamers, who dream of salvation by an external attention to a few dry duties, while they are slaves to their own carnal lusts, and at enmity against God and the doctrines of his free-grace: living in hatred to God's ministers, and foaming out their own shame, by cruel aspersions on their character, and on the sweet gospel, which is, every way, according to godliness."

But these swine have the jewel of the written word in their snouts, (not in their hearts) and what use do they make of it? the same as the swine with the jewel of gold, pollute it, and sometimes hide it in the earth, covering it over with the polluted and polluting doctrines of men: with commentaries and expositions, derogatory to Christ's glory, and by exalting the creature above him, disgraceful and destructive to themselves!

Let not the reader, think me too warm in my opposition to those *pretendedly holy* people; but let him rather, seriously consider the enormity of their CRIME—To rob God of his sovereign will, power, wisdom, and glory; and transfer them to MAN, who naturally knows nothing, and can do nothing, but awfully sin against the Lord! Christ himself saith, "If any man climbeth up any other way, the same is a *thief* and a *robber*." And shall such a thief rob Christ, the thrice precious Christ, of his honour and glory, and we who love him, stand silently sunk in apathy; as if we were his accomplices? No: justice and honesty forbid it. Our Master is ROBBED, and love to him constrains us to cry loudly "Stop Thief;" arrest him with the warrant of God's Word, and bring him to justice! Bring him to the just tribunal of the *Holy Bible*, and let him be tried by the *prophets* and *apostles*; and all that love Christ heartily, will bear their willing testimony against him. And for our authority, thus to apprehend, and bring him to justice, we have, "*Thus saith the Lord:*" in 1 John iv. 1. "Try the spirits whether they be of God" and in Rev. ii. 2. a commendation of our conduct, in his detection and condemnation; "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience and how thou canst not BEAR them, that are evil: and thou hast TRIED THEM *which say they are* APOSTLES, and ARE NOT, and hast found them LIARS."

For a minister of the gospel not to detect error, in my opinion, is to neglect an important part of his incumbent duty, to discover a great luke-warmness in the cause of Christ, and to leave those, over whom the Holy Spirit hath made him an overseer, much exposed to most dangerous enemies—the abominable doctrines of Antichrist! For my own part, I must confess, that it is a painful task to the *universal* charity of my nature; but my New man delights in it, constrained by love to the Blessed Redeemer.

I cannot conclude, without making my acknowledgements to the querist, for the HONOR he has done me, in classing my work with the *GOSPEL MAGAZINE*,* as I am assured that the general contents of both, are in one sweet harmony of sound, and the aim of both, the glory of Christ, in the furtherance of the everlasting gospel.

We bless the Lord that we possess a knowledge of that jewel of gold, the word of the Lord, and know its invaluable contents : for the Lord has given us the jewel of faith, the trial of which is more precious than gold : which looks to Christ, the man that the Lord hath made more precious than gold, and who enables us to say in the severest trials, " when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

May the Lord direct, guide, keep, and abundantly bless the Querist and his friends, and give them in all their tribulations, such confidence in his golden promises, that they may faithfully defend the truth in the face of all opposition, rejoicing that they are more than conquerors, through him who hath loved his church, and given himself for it; and to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

* The Gospel Magazine, is a Work of long standing, published by W. DAY, 17, Goswell Street, and I avail myself of this opportunity to recommend it to my Readers. It is indeed the only Magazine, that I can conscientiously recommend, because the only one, with which I am acquainted, that merits the appellation of GOSPEL. I do not mean to recommend every piece that appears in its pages ; for there are a FEW, sometimes, opposite to the PURE gospel. But it should be recollected, that as the work is open to free discussion, those few are inserted, only, that they may meet with public REFUTATION, which is generally executed with zeal, judgment and ability, either by correspondents, or by the worthy and learned EDITOR. This, I assure my Readers, is an hearty and unasked for recommendation ; and must be impartial, as I have not the honor, in any way, of being acquainted with the Editor, neither have I any CONCERN whatever with the work, except a CONCERN for its prosperity.