

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

THE
Outlines of Solutions to critical Questions in Theology:
PUBLICLY DISCUSSED BY

W. W. HORNE,
at Hephzibah Chapel, Three Colt Street, Limehouse.

No. IX.] SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1824. [Price 2d.

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

QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, MARCH 1, 1824.

How could the ETERNAL WORD, that was made flesh, pray for that glory he essentially possessed? And if not his essential glory, what glory was that for which he prayed? as recorded in JOHN XVII. 5.

(Continued from page 64—Last Number.)

CONSEQUENTLY if his *human* soul pre-existed, it was very dissimilar to those of his brethren, which did not pre-exist: and that dissimilarity must unavoidably prove an immoveable prevention to his taking the very place of his people; which prevention nullifies salvation, by rendering the sacrifice of his soul for sin, inefficacious: for he might as well have taken upon him the nature of angels, or any other nature, as to have taken a *soul*, or rather to have possessed prior to the commencement of time, a soul so dissimilar to the souls of his brethren!

But blessed be God, we have not so learned Christ: we are well assured, and perfectly satisfied, that he was one chosen out of the people, a Lamb of the flock, flesh of our flesh, in all points like unto his brethren! *very man!*

Without even an iota of dissimilarity to his people! And that he hath offered his *soul* a sacrifice for our *souls*, and his *body* a sacrifice for our *bodies*; by that one offering perfecting his church for ever!

And having thus completed their salvation, spoiled principalities, and powers, made an end of sin, unstung death, and taken away the victory of the grave, he rises from the tomb! He ascends to his own glory!

Hear the unbounded acclamations of saints and angels: hear the bursts of joy throughout all the innumerable company of the heavenly hosts, at his Royal Return! at his grand re-assumption of his Eternal throne! The very heavens seem to rend with the universal shouts of triumph; with the unequalled plaudits of his glory! Hear their universal shout; The triumph of saints, of angels, and of God himself! Hear, O ye ransomed sinners, and join the grand Chorus: "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and THE KING OF GLORY shall come in; Who is THE KING OF GLORY? THE LORD strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and THE KING OF GLORY shall come in. Who is THE KING OF GLORY? The LORD of hosts, he is the KING OF GLORY.*" By virtue of the astonishing union of his two natures, in his complex and glorious Person, the humanity is exalted to an equality with the Divinity; and God and the Lamb, fills the throne, and is and shall be worshipped to all eternity: The King eternal, immortal: The King of Sion and of saints on earth, and the King of Glory in the Heavens; to whom be ascribed the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and for ever! Amen. (For more on this subject, vide Number II.

QUESTION.

What is the difference between our naturally sinful thoughts, and the temptations of the devil?

SOLUTION.

WE may consider THOUGHT the internal motion, action, or energy of the desires, wishes, inclinations, affections, and volitions of the human mind; exercised painfully or pleasurablely, either on events past, as assisted by memory,

or on present circumstances, and objects of desire, difficulty, importance, or future dread, with anticipation of solid enjoyment, or of painful affliction, disappointment and bereavement. Thought, planning, devising means, and making arrangements for the execution of *desires* and *wishes*, which are fed by a sweet hope of their accomplishment in some future time. Man is a thinking being; and perhaps I shall not carry my ideas too far, if I assert, that he, at no time, ceases to think, during his short life on earth: and as the thinking faculty is attached to his never-dying soul, he will, as an immortal, continue to think, when his body is mouldering to ashes in the silent tomb!

But consistently with the Question, we take into our serious consideration, his "NATURALLY SINFUL THOUGHTS." When we survey the quickness, extensiveness, and power of human thought, we must be struck with astonishment at the vastness, and (to us,) immeasurable capaciousness of the human soul! Employed in contemplation, in philosophical research, or mathematical admeasurements and demonstrations, with what an astonishing acumen, and nicety of critical determination, are his problems solved, and subjects of greatest difficulty elucidated!

His surprising powers expand with literary cultivation, and he mentally "grasps great purposes," with ease and pleasure peculiarly his own! He surveys the heavens and the earth, with the penetrating eye of science, and the *creation* in its enamouring charms, is sublimely inspected with correctness of thought; and sometimes with moral reflections, on the incomprehensible and eternal existence of their great and wonderful Creator!

But if we contemplate man in a *religious* point of view, we must be led to exclaim, how is the mighty fallen! How is the fine gold become dim! We survey with the eye of spiritual understanding, every feature of the soul distorted by the fall of ADAM, and totally destitute of a real knowledge of God! After all his penetrating researches into universal nature, he is unacquainted with himself!

"———He trembles at himself,

And in himself is lost, At home a stranger!"

For "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people:" concerning man then in his fallen state, I shall venture to affirm, that his thoughts, in a religious sense, are altogether *naturally SINFUL!*

1. The heart of man is the seat and fountain of sinful thoughts: hear the following plain, and awfully striking description, given by the Lord himself in his unerring word; Matt. xv. 19. Jer. xvii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Genesis vi. 5. “*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies—The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—Laying aside (saith Peter to believers) all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings,*” which things, as believers, they could not lay aside, except they naturally possessed them. But to close the melancholy statement by the third quotation; in which we have the account of the Great Searcher of hearts himself, immediately after the fall: “*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that EVERY IMAGINATION of the THOUGHTS of the heart, was ONLY EVIL continually!*” Where, then, is the boasted free-will of man to come to God? Whence flows his *natural ability* to repent, pray, believe, and embrace Christ? Not from the *heart*, for it possesses nothing but sin, and every abomination! It is *only evil; evil continually!* Those doctrines flow only from the religion of the flesh, which maintains an inveterate hostility to the religion of the Spirit, and the glory of Christ!

2. Sinful thoughts, then, are sins in embryo, engendered by evil *concupiscence*: according to the statement of James (chap. i. 13—15.) that lust *conceives* and brings forth sin; the consequence of which is *DEATH spiritual*, to the child of God in his feelings, and *death eternal*, to the sinner who dies in his sins!

These “naturally sinful thoughts” are *first, self-sufficient* thoughts, and *erroneous* thoughts of God: Psalm l. 21.—“*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*” Man naturally supposes, that Jehovah, like himself, is *changeable* in his love and grace, and that he can *love to day* an object, that he may *hate to-morrow*: and that the affairs of his GREAT SALVATION rest not upon the determined council of his will, but on the *self-sufficient will* of the creature, who has power to *receive or reject* his *offered* grace, and thereby to determine who shall inherit those mansions which God prepared for his people, before the foundation of the world! *Second, Proud* thoughts, Gal. vi.

3. “*If a man think himself to be something when he is no-*

thing, he deceiveth himself." *Third*, *vain* thoughts, which dwell in the corrupt nature of a child of God, as innates which he cannot shake off. "How long shall *vain thoughts* lodge in thee." Jer. iv. 14. To which the child of God replies, "I hate *vain thoughts*, but thy law do I love." (Psalm cxix. 113.) *Fourth*, *Self-justifying* thoughts, as Paul hath said of the heathen, who are a law unto themselves—"Their *thoughts* accusing, or else excusing one another:" (Rom. ii. 15.) When they perform their duties, their ambitious thoughts pronounce them justified by their own righteousness, which is as *dross* and *dung* in the estimation of infinitely free grace. *Fifth*, *Evil* thoughts, (Matt. xv. 19.) Those intruders upon the tried Christian, and which grieve "his *righteous* soul from day to day!"

3. We may more systematically state these *thoughts*, and give a more concise description of them, by an adoption of the Holy Spirit's account of man in his fallen condition: "EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH?" (James iii. 15.) *Earthly*—his thoughts are confined to the things of the earth: the world is his treasure, and there is his heart, in pursuit of worldly *pleasures, honors, luxuries, or gain!* *Sensual*, in this regular gradation, the apostle is directed to advance another degree in his description of human depravity. His thoughts are not only *earthly*, but *sensual!*—the lusts of the *flesh*, which are the corruptions of the old man, denominated the *deceitful lusts*, of which, modesty forbids a circumstantial description, cause him to groan before God, "O wretched wretched man that I am!" *Devilish*. This is the superlative degree of sin which dwells in us.—Consisting of pride, anger, wrath, envy, revenge, malice, and murder, which was awfully exemplified in CAIN, the first murderer, who slew his righteous brother ABEL!

Thus, with *earthly, sensual, and devilish* thoughts, the hearts of men are universally polluted, and human nature, altogether corrupt! Happy is that man, who feels sin's plague, and is led to the gracious throne, with the humble confession of "Unclean, unclean!" praying to be plunged in the fountain of Christ's blood, which washes from sin and from all uncleanness!

4. The sinner blessed with a deep sense of his wretched state by nature, has frequently *desponding thoughts*, and is ready to conclude that there is no salvation for such a wretch as he feels himself to be! but how graciously the

Lord addresses him! Isaiah lv. 7, 8. “*Let the wicked, (the sensibly wicked) forsake his way, (his own self-righteous way, and look unto Jesus THE WAY of salvation) and the unrighteous man (unrighteous in his own eyes) his thoughts: (his despairing thoughts) and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God: for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways, saith the Lord.*” Your thoughts are gloomy and discouraging, but mine are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give unto you an expected end.

5. The believer, in trials, outwardly and inwardly, is painfully exercised with *anxious thoughts*: to remove which, the dear Redeemer affectionately exhorts, “Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil (*ἡ κακία molestia*, trouble) thereof. You have a sufficiency of trouble attached to this day, without looking *anxiously* forward, for the *imagined* troubles of futurity: which, perhaps, may never arrive; or to which time, your natural life may not be extended—“You know not what shall be on the morrow;” but your heavenly Father will provide, nay, has already provided every thing necessary for your perseverance to Eternal Glory.

I shall proceed, now, to give you a short description of “the temptations of the devil,” and attempt to shew the distinction between them and our natural corruptions, as requested by the *Querist*.

1. The DEVIL, *δαιμόλιος diabolus*, a calumniator, a back-biter. Every backbiter performs the character of the devil: who is the accuser of the brethren, even to God himself! Their *ἑχθρὸς*, their *adversary: adversarius in lite*; their adversary at law. Who maintains a legal process against them. Thus he appeared in court against Job; and thus he attempts to carry on a law-suit against all the children of God. (1 Pet. v. 8.)

2. Notice his indefatigable activity in this diabolical business. He walketh about, going to and fro in the earth, seeking whom he may devour! Restless in his attempts to dishonour the Lord Jesus Christ, which he strives to accomplish by his *wiles, devices, and fiery darts*. WILES—plausible persuasions in the soul of a *poor* sinner, not to trust in, and rely entirely upon Christ for salvation: but

to introduce something of his own, that Jesus may not have all the power and glory in saving, through the virtue of his blood, and the riches of his grace! Poor sinner, he plays upon the legality of your heart, by this *Arminian* persuasion, and plunges you into distress; whence issue doubts and fears, whether Christ is your Redeemer!—This temptation is easily distinguishable from your naturally sinful thoughts, which would never lead you to self-righteousness; for they have a tendency more than ever to convince you of the need of a *whole* and complete Saviour, such as our precious Jesus is to his redeemed.

DEVICES—art, cunning, fraud, inventions, and a shew of wisdom; for he has the wisdom of a serpent, and the strength of a lion. He argumentatively persuades the *believer*, that his unworthiness will exclude him from the love and grace of Christ; or that the Lord will not keep the word of his promise unto his people—that, in the time of darkness, he is angry, and will be no more gracious.—These are known to be his devices, by their being degradations to the constancy and faithfulness of him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!

FIERY DARTS.—*Sudden* suggestions of heart-rending discouragement, and *immediate* temptations to the commission of frightful crimes!

The sudden and unexpected manner in which you are thus assailed, clearly distinguishes his *darts* of temptation, from your naturally evil thoughts, which are gradual in their conception; and though very iniquitous in their nature, and to you unspeakably painful in their operations, never meditate the dishonour of the Lord Jesus Christ!—Sometimes, even *blasphemous* ideas are very suddenly formed in your mind, at which you shudder with awful alarm! These are immediately from the powers of darkness, tempting you to blaspheme the name of Christ, who is so precious to the hidden man of your heart!

3. But if we take a view of the temptations of Christ himself, in the wilderness, as recorded in Matt. iv, we shall be led to an immediate and indubitable distinction between the suggestions of Satan, and our naturally sinful inclinations. For as he was tempted in all points *like us*; the portraiture of his temptations, must also be that of our own.

The first temptation with which he was assailed, was to question his Sonship—“*If thou be the SON of GOD!*”—

Wonder not, then, poor sinner, that he thus attacks your unworthy soul: you may fairly conclude from this account that your doubts respecting your interest in the affections of your covenant Father, are the diabolical suggestions of the terrible enemy of God and man!

He then attacks the Redeemer, with the awful temptation to presumption, and finally to suicide! "*Cast thyself down, for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, &c.*" How often do the *Arminians* echo this Satanic language in the ears of God's elect! "If ye are the Sons of God," say they, cast yourselves down; you may wallow in your sins: for *election* is the security of your salvation, and consequently your license to sin!" "God forbid!" saith the child of God, "how can we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? We are not under the law, but under the reign of grace; which will rule in us unto eternal life! And Satan, Arminian-like, will thus assail our souls with the temptation to presumption: but, the truly sensible, humble, and broken-hearted sinner, walks with God; looking unto, and leaning upon the omnipotent power of Jesus, in whose precious blood, "he quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked."

He farther violently assaults the Captain of our salvation, with the possession of all worldly pomp, and greatness, on condition of *worshipping him!* Dear Christian, learn from this: that the devil has no objection to any religious worship whatever, if it be not the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ! Our precious Immanuel is the grand object of the enemy's malice, and all his aim, in our temptations, is the *dishonour* of Christ, by our unbelief, distrust, doubts, and fears; but he, whose grace was sufficient for Paul under the buffetings of Satan, and who sustained Peter when in the devil's sieve, and restored him by the soul-dissolving look of love, will with every temptation make out a way for our escape, and finally make us more than conquerors, through him who hath loved us!

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

To whom, and on whose behalf the request of Christ, in JOHN XVII. 15. was made? What the evil? And how is it known by those interested in it, that the request is answered?

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No. X.] SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1824. [Price 2d.

Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1824.

To whom, and on whose behalf the request of Christ, in JOHN XVII. 15. was made? What the evil? And how is it known by those interested in it, that the request is answered?

SOLUTION.

“A FOOL may ask a question, but it calls for a wise man to answer it,” is a very common saying among us. But perhaps on some occasions it is not strictly true. For a fool cannot but ask a foolish question; to which a wise man would give himself very little trouble to reply: adhering to the advice of Solomon, “*Answer not a fool according to his folly.*” In selecting questions for discussion, at this meeting, I take the liberty of observing, that it requires a little judgment, in order to *diversify* the subjects, as much as possible. The proposer of the question before us, has founded it on a most sublime portion of God’s word: and

by such a selection, discovers himself a man made wise unto salvation: yet it will be in your recollection, that the subject approximates so closely to two others, already discussed and printed, that it would be impossible for me to enter fully into some of the most glorious parts of it, without much repetition. To avoid which, as much as possible, I shall attend more particularly to the EVIL from which the people of God are kept, in answer to the mediatorial intercession of the Lord Jesus.

He asks, 1. To whom is the request made? The answer is easy, and already prepared in the scriptures: To your father and his father, to your God and his God. The glory of Christ in his official capacity, as Mediator, between God and man, is here most beautifully set forth: and to the eye of faith, shines with all the glories of Eternal Divinity, arrayed in human clay! I consider this 17th chapter of John, the dedication of the whole church of God, by our covenant head, to his Father: upon the ground of his finished work—the complete and everlasting removal of all his people’s sins, by the blood of his cross—he presents them without spot or blemish unto his Father, “Here am I, and the children thou hast given me:” I, their surety, who have paid the dreadful debt they had contracted; and they, thine own jewels, the purchase of my blood! “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine.” O what a consolation to be assured that we are interested in the intercession of the precious Christ! Whose plea must prevail, for he pleads his *right* and *title* to his own blood-bought family, and reminds the Father of his own electing love to those who were given to him, in the covenant of redemption!

“Our cause can never never fail,
For Jesus pleads and must prevail!”

2. “*In whose behalf is the request made?*” Not in the behalf of the world—we have his own word for that, “I pray not for the world!” How conclusive is this sentence: never was a disputative point so gloriously settled! The world saith he, have no interest, even in my prayer: I pray only for “those whom thou hast given me.” And if he did not pray for them, we may safely conclude that he never died for them. But the request is made in behalf of a

people, loved with everlasting love, (Jer. xxxi. 3.) elected, (Eph. i. 4.) adopted, (Rom. viii. 15—17.) and completely redeemed; and who shall, in consequence, most assuredly be called and regenerated, and finally glorified with him, who presents them before the throne of his Father without spot, without the least imperfection! Thus shall the great Redeemer “see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.” Thus will he successfully intercede in behalf of his own *redeemed*, till they are all glorified with himself!

3. What the **EVIL**, from which they shall be kept? This is the most important part of our subject, upon the ground of experimental godliness: for it is of little avail with the enquirer after vital religion, to know the doctrines of the gospel without the blessed assurance by the Holy Spirit’s testimony, that he is interested in them.

EVIL, (*πονηρος*) which implies three things:—spiteful opposition, sinful pollution, and trials in providence and by temptation.

1. *Spiteful* persecution; which the *honest* and *faithful* Christian cannot escape: for “if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution.” Those who are born after the flesh, (of a fleshly or self-righteous religion) will persecute those who are born after the Spirit. We must expect it, Christians, on account of the enmity of the carnal mind, against the sovereignty, freeness, and riches of abounding grace, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.—Your characters will be defamed, your names cast out for nought, and malicious misrepresentations will clothe you in the garb of frightful infamy! But hear the exhortation of him, who though infinitely holy, was represented as a “wine-bibber,” and a very devil; “Rejoice,” saith he, “and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven! In persecution he will keep his people from the **EVIL**;” give them strength equal to their day, and bless them with an everlasting deliverance from, and a triumphant victory over, all their enemies; in a glorious fulfilment of that delightful promise, “*Your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and ye shall tread upon their high places.*”

2. The *evil*, the *sin*, which by the *fall* entered into the world, and has brought ruin, and untold miseries upon the

whole race of man! From *evil* inwardly. From *sin* which dwells in the corrupt nature of the believer; and which daily plagues and distresses us! That sin has not the victory over him, will be the triumph of the child of God to eternity. For though it wages war with the *new* and *hidden* man, it shall not overcome, conquer, and take the government of the soul! No, dear Christians, vile as we are in our own eyes, and afflicted as we are by the motions of iniquity within us, we are kept by the power of God from carrying them into practice, while Love Divine teaches us to abhor the very garment spotted by the flesh!

From the *evil* of *sin*; from its awful consequences, and tyrannic government, we are daily kept, in answer to the petition of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And though the children of God are, ever have been, and ever will be “*slanderosly* reported,” by the carnally religious world, as *Antinomians* and *licentious* persons, they feel and enjoy communion with God, walk in his delightful ways, reject, with holy disdain, their own righteousness, put no confidence in themselves, but rejoice alone in Christ Jesus their righteousness and strength. And I may add, they are the *only holy people* in the world! For Jesus gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Tit. ii. 14.)

Their purity is in, and from Christ, who dwells in their hearts by faith! “They are the pure in heart,” and shall see God. (Matt. v. 8.)

3. From the *EVIL* of temptation. Though they are frequently grieved with sore temptations, even in those tormenting flames, the Lord is with them, that they may not kindle upon them, to their destruction! For they are in answer to the request of Christ, *kept* from the *EVIL*, “with the right hand of God’s righteousness.” And hence, James has strongly expressed himself on the subject:— “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation! for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.” (James i. 12.)

4. From the *EVIL* of *error*, *false doctrine*, and *erroneous worship*! O what an inestimable blessing to be led into the truth, by the Spirit of truth! For *error* is of *damning* consequence! ‘*Damnable* doctrines! Doctrines of devils!’

“ Strong delusions!” which lead to a malignant rejection and persecution of the truth as it is in Jesus! Such are the doctrines of *free-will*, *self-obtained holiness*, and *goodness*, to the rejection, and persecution of the sovereign, distinguishing, unmeritedly free, and abounding grace, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! These doctrines of ROME, do but stir up the enmity of the carnal mind to the riches of mercy, and lead their votaries, clothed with Arminian pride, in arms of hostility, to oppose the gospel of salvation by the Redeemer’s most precious blood!

But graciously guided into all truth, the sheep of Christ are divinely kept sound in the faith of God’s elect; valiant for the truth on the earth; stedfast and unmovable, in an entire reliance on Jesus for salvation, and shall receive a crown of life, that fadeth not away! O sirs! what a distinguishing favor! What amazing grace! That we, so prone to err; so naturally fond of the flesh-pleasing doctrines of our own pretended goodness, should be led to reject them all, with a zealous detestation of soul, and most ardently desire to be found “ in Christ, not having our own *righteousness* which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD BY FAITH! What debtors are we to FREE GRACE! O Blessed Spirit! not unto us, not unto us, but to *thy name* be the glory! Thou who workest all our works in us! To THEE we are indebted for a knowledge of ourselves, and a knowledge of a precious Jesus! For repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ! To THEE, O BLESSED COMFORTER! we are everlastingly indebted for *keeping* us (in answer to the request of the blessed Jesus) from the *evil* of error, which so much abounds, and for that knowledge of the truth, which has made us free from legal bondage! O carry on thy work! Render error more than ever detestable, and Truth more than ever invaluable precious to our souls!

5. From the EVIL attendant on *tribulations*. External afflictions and trials, are frequently *curses* to the ungodly: but they all work together with innumerable blessings, for good, to those who love God, and who are the called, according to Jehovah’s gracious purpose! If the rod of outward tribulation, is laid upon a

believer in Jesus, it is not in wrath, for he has said, "Fury is not in me." Though it wears a threatening aspect, it is invisibly clothed in tender mercy, and comes as a covenant, and absolutely necessary favour from the Father of Mercies, and God of all comforts. As a prevention of *evil*, which prosperity would have produced, or as an introduction to a blessing, which could not have been known, and enjoyed, only in adversity!

And so of those *evils* under which the immortal soul groans: *doubts, fears, unbelief, hardness of heart, darkness, the absence of God*, and our inactivity during his absence, in his delightful ways! All these, painful as they are, shall not injure, but prove, eventually, advantageous and promoting to our faith. By them we learn, that faith is God's gift! it is the Spirit who quickens the soul; and that without Christ we can do nothing, no nothing! God's strength is made (*experimentally*) perfect in our weakness, and we are, thereby, led to glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us! And that our unbelief does not make the faith of God of none effect: for "though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself!"

6. We are kept from the EVIL which is in the world, of every description, as the sheep of Christ; as his own brethren; as his infinitely beloved bride! As the portion and delight of the Lord! as his own jewels locked up in the casket of his everlasting love! He who keepeth us, never slumbers nor sleeps! His eye is ever upon us! he watches us day and night! As his elect—as his redeemed—as his sanctified and spotless people—the HOLY OF THE LORD; made so by himself, we are KEPT BY the power of God, through faith, unto salvation!

7. "How those interested in the request are to know that it is answered?" They cannot know but as the request is *verified* in their experience. Many persons have a very clear discernment of gospel doctrines, who feel no real love to Christ, but remain, notwithstanding their acquired knowledge of salvation's wonderful plan, dead in trespasses and sin: as it is written, "*Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*" (1 Cor. viii. 1.) How different is a sound creed with a proud, vain, and *puffed-up* heart, from the humble, penitent, and broken spirit that pants for Christ,

as the heated hart for the cooling streams of the meandering brook! Such a sinner, interested in the Saviour's request, knows that his covenant Father hath conferred the blessing requested, on his unworthy soul, by the enjoyment of it in his experience. For he can with the strictest propriety, adopt the triumphant language of DAVID: BY THIS I KNOW *that thou favourest me; because my enemy doth not triumph over me.* (Psalm xli. 11.)

He is kept by the power of God from the *evils* already described. Though inward evils perplex and grieve him, they have not the victory over him; the evil of error, is to him, truly detestable, while truth, in all its divine glories, and unspeakable sweetness, is ever invaluablely precious to his soul! And when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Holy Spirit lifteth up against him, the standard of a precious Christ.

The humiliating, and yet consoling *implication* of the gracious request, is worth our whole attention—"Keep them, O Father!" They cannot keep themselves, then: no: they would plunge into floods of ungodliness, if not kept by the affectionate care, perpetual watchfulness, tender interpositions, and invincible power of their Almighty God! A child of God is taught to know and humbly acknowledge that he can no more preserve himself from *evil*, than he can speak a new world into existence! Then give the Lord the glory due unto his name, for his *guidance* and *preservation* of our poor helpless souls unto the present moment. "It is, indeed, of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." We should *now* be under the domination of sin, earth, and hell, those combined tyrants, that are in perpetual opposition to our perseverance, but for the exertion and continual prevention of his omnipotent grace.

We are, in answer to the request in consideration, *kept entirely* by the Almighty Power: he asks for no help, he needs no assistance! If he *did*, we could give him none: Such is our imbecility, that we are *without strength*, to perform the least good thing; and such is our depravity, that we are not only perpetually hostile to every thing that is truly good, but naturally prone to every species of iniquity and ungodliness!—We are kept, then, to a miracle!—We had, ere now, been consumed of our lusts, and swal-

lowed up by our enemies, *if the Lord had not been on our side!*

We have been kept by him, with that sleepless, and ceaseless watchfulness peculiar to God himself: and with that exquisitely tender care, which alone emanates from Almighty Love!

1. As the careful watchman keepeth the city: For "except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." SION is surrounded with his walls of salvation, and encompassed about with his everlasting arms!

2. As the rich man keeps his *gold* and *jewels*: so "the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, (Mal. iv. 2.) are *safely taken care of*, as Jehovah's invaluable; who will never give them up till he has brought them to heaven!" They shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels. (Mal. iii. 17.)

3. As the tender mother, her darling infant, which she hugs to her affectionate bosom, entwines with her arms, and nourishes with her milk! "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me."—(Isaiah xlix. 13, 16.)

" Yet, saith the Lord, should nature change,
And mothers monsters prove,
Sion still dwells upon the heart,
Of everlasting love!"

QUESTION

FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

What are intended by the staves BEAUTY and BANDS in ZECH. XI.? And who the shepherds which are cut off?

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BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

THE
Outlines of Solutions to critical Questions in Theology
PUBLICLY DISCUSSED BY

W. W. HORNE,

at Hephzibah Chapel, Three Colt Street, Limehouse.

No. XI.] SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1824. [Price 2d.

Τα πάντα και εν πασι Χριστος.—PAUL.

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

QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, MARCH 22, 1824.

*What are intended by the staves BEAUTY and BANDS in
ZECH. XI.? And who the shepherds which are cut off?*

SOLUTION.

HOW solemnly awful the consideration of a soul, under the everlasting wrath of God!—Of an individual professor of *creature* holiness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, given over, justly given over, to the fatal delusions of his own heart; But how much more awfully dreadful the divine severity, in totally casting off a whole nation, and leaving them *century after century*, to perish in their sins! And yet how awfully glorious the consideration, when other nations more populous and extensive, are graciously called in the wonderful dispensation of our God, to succeed and substitute an ungrateful nation, *justly de-*

serted, for their opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ ! I am led to these remarks, by a solemn, yet pleasing view of the eventful and truly interesting contents of the prophetic chapter, on which the Question before us is founded. I “ *behold here the goodness and severity of God :*” on them which fell—namely, the Jews—SEVERITY—but on *THEE*, —the Gentile Church—GOODNESS!—Our God does all things to the praise of his glorious justice, holiness, mercy and truth ! The fall of the Jews proves the grand introduction of the gospel into the nations of the earth ! And he now calls them “ a people, which were not a people, and her beloved, which was not beloved !” The Gentiles are brought to the light, and kings to the brightness of the rising of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS !

O ye Inhabitants of Great Britain ! How highly favored of the Lord ! The aborigines of our divinely distinguished Island, were devoted to the heathenish worship of the Druids, with whom they superstitiously trusted the concerns of their souls ! and even after the introduction of Christianity, for centuries, the Word of the Lord was locked up in the Latin Tongue, from their reading, examination, and inspection ; while the tyranny of priestcraft, usurped authority over their consciences, and they, ignorantly bowing to Romish superstition, implicitly embraced all the *mum-meries* of the Mother of Harlots and abominations ! But now, thrice happy Britain ! we have not “ precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little,” he does not speak to us, “ with stammering lips and ANOTHER TONGUE ” (Isaiah xxviii. 10, 11.) But he has given us his *holy word* in our own language, wherein we have blessing upon blessing, promise upon promise, grace upon grace ! O infinitely boundless privileges ! Not only revealed in his Holy Word, but confirmed in our hearts, ye called saints of the Most High ! by the Holy and Blessed Comforter ! And O what external blessings, in assembling ourselves together. He has not dealt so with all nations, praise ye the Lord ! At this moment, blessed with privileges above all other nations on the face of the globe ! O that our *base ingratitude* and the almost universal adoption and preaching of *Arminianism*, in opposition to the sovereign and distinguishing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, may not cause him to withdraw our national pri-

vileges,—cut asunder the staves of BEAUTY and BANDS, from us, and say unto us as a country, “I will no more feed you!” For alas! Such AN ABUSE of Divine blessings is often the harbinger of approaching destruction! God ever keep us, if it his will, from the *Roman Yoke!*

The time prophetically described in Zech. XI. is the coming of the Blessed MESSIAH; immediately after which the Jews are cut off, and the gospel, with all its light, love, and liberty, given to the *Gentiles!*

1. Amidst the awful declension of vital religion among the Jews, and his determination to visit them with national destruction; the Great Shepherd still feeds, and takes care of his own little, humble flock, which he denominates The Flock of SLAUGHTER!

For they are slain,

First, By the Lord himself—the Holy Spirit applies the *holy law*, breaks up the fountain of sin, and, as saith the apostle, sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it *slew* me: But the Lord thus kills by the ministration of “*death and condemnation*, that he may make *alive*,” by the ministration of life and righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, They are slain in their reputation, by persecuting calumny, and many of them have been *slain* and destroyed BODILY—even in this country, they have been burnt at the stake, in glorious maintenance of a good conscience!

“Whose ashes flew, no *marble* tells us whither!
They liv'd unknown, till persecution *dragg'd*
Them into fame, and chas'd them into heaven!”

COWPER.

Hence the language of inspiration, “For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (Rom. viii. 36.)

Third, They are frequently *slain* in their consolations, by trials, temptations, and indwelling sin; but amidst all the Great Immanuel commands; “Feed the Flock of Slaughter!” “Their possessors *slay* them,”—who *possess* their consciences, and slay them by error, and *self-righteousness*; and say they are not guilty, for “they think they are doing God service. And those who sell them, say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich:” They procure riches

and fat benefices by Priestcraft, and keep in *ignorance*, *precious* souls, who are votaries to their Romish doctrines, and priestly usurpation! But our God shall undeceive his own elect, and “in all these things, make them more than conquerors, through him who hath loved them!”

Amidst a very splendid, self-righteous, ceremonious, and *lifeless* profession among the Jews; there were a few, who lamented the evil of the times; and who knew saving grace in Christ, “Behold I leave in the midst of THEE, (Jerusalem) an *afflicted* and *poor* people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon their God!”

The instruments with which the Lord feeds The Flock of Slaughter, are called BEAUTY and BANDS, OR BINDERS. In answer then, to the Question, I will endeavour to shew you what we are in a scriptural and spiritual sense, to consider by

1. *The staff* BEAUTY. The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, on which every divinely-taught sinner is directed to lean, and solely depend for eternal salvation. 1. The very feet of those who are *sent* of God to publish it are denominated *beautiful*. Rom. x. 15. “How beautiful are the *feet* of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” They are the *feet* of God’s spiritual oxen that tread out the corn. Feet of *faith*, fixed on the rock Christ, and which walk in him after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Their feet are beautiful in the eyes of God’s children—their coming—their approaching—they are beautiful upon the *mountains*, saith the prophet; because, as the inhabitants of the rock, they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and from the top of the high mountains of Israel they shout salvation through his atoning blood!

2. Christ himself is the chief *beauty* of the gospel—the sum and substance of all evangelical preaching, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last, in the salvation of a poor sinner, in whose estimation he is the FAIREST AMONG TEN THOUSAND, AND ALTOGETHER LOVELY. Yet O how astonishingly blind is man by nature! the Jews could see no comeliness in him, nor we before we were made by the Holy Spirit sensible of his worth, by feeling our absolute need of such a complete, glorious, Almighty, and unspeakably precious Saviour! “*He hath no form, nor comeliness:*

and when we shall see him, there is no BEAUTY that we should desire him." (Isaiah liii. 2.) The *beautiful* righteousness, and glories of the Lord Jesus are unfurled in the preaching of the gospel, on which sinners feast their ravished eyes in the gracious accomplishment of the prophecy in Isaiah xxxiii. 17. "Thine eyes shall see the king in his BEAUTY:" The beauty of his person, offices, sacrifice, love, grace, care of his sheep, and the energy of his power in their preservations, are charms of Immanuel, so overcoming to regenerated souls, that looking unto him, the author and finisher of their faith, sin, earth, and hell, are vanquished at the very mention of his name, in prayer, praise, and worship in the *beauty* of holiness! For "he beautifies the meek with salvation," and "appoints unto them that mourn in Sion, to give unto them BEAUTY for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning," (Isaiah lxi. 3.) and then the innate desire of the soul so divinely *beautified* and blessed with the comeliness which Christ has put upon it, is minutely described by DAVID, in Psalm xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the BEAUTY of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple."

Beautified thus in the garments of salvation, the immortal and regenerated soul, becomes lovely in the eyes of Christ, the King of Glory. The Holy Spirit hath *purified* the heart, and "the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought GOLD:" the work of Christ is hers by imputation, and she is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; so that "the King greatly desires her BEAUTY, for he is her Lord, and she worships him." (Psalm xlv. 11—13.)

4. The Church rejoicingly beholds in Christ the BEAUTY of holiness; the harmony of all the attributes of God in her salvation; the *beautiful* and spotless righteousness of her God, made her own; the *beautiful* Lord and government of his church! and the beauty and *preciousness* of his ordinances, as he is beheld and enjoyed in them.

We enquire now, How *this staff*, BEAUTY, was cut asunder?

1. The Lord saith, "That I might break the covenant, which I had made with all the people." Not the everlast-

ing covenant of love, grace, and redemption; that never can be violated: having the immovable confirmation of the oath and absolute promises of God: "My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once I have sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David." (Psalm lxxxix. 34, 35.)

But the covenant broken, was the *national* covenant;—first violated on their part, in their *persecuting* conduct to Christ; in consequence of which he very justly took from them the gospel, and gave it to the Gentiles, which was the cutting asunder, or cutting off from them the staff of BEAUTY.

2. In cutting off the gospel from them, the Lord most solemnly declares; "*I will not feed you.*" (verse 2.) How unspeakably awful! The gospel of the kingdom is preached; but it is *hidden* from the *wise* and *prudent*, and *revealed* unto babes: the wise scribes and pharisees then, as they are now, had eyes, but they saw not, ears had they but could not hear the precious gospel! The divinely harmonious accents of everlasting love.

3. "It was broken in *that day.*" (verse 11.) In the day when the Lord cast off the Jews very justly for their rebellion against Christ, and sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel of reconciliation to the Gentiles. Let the similarity of language between this verse, and Acts xiii. 46, 48. be particularly noticed, as it serves to elucidate the whole of this chapter. "*And so the poor of the flock, that waited upon me, knew that it was THE WORD OF THE LORD.*" (ver. 11.) Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, "*It was necessary that the WORD OF THE LORD, should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles; and when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the WORD OF THE LORD, and as many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.*" Acts xiii. 46, 48.

4. That it refers to the death of Christ is evident from the circumstantial description of Judas, in the 13th verse. "And I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear; so they weighed for my price, *thirty pieces of silver.* And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price, that I was prized at of them." Then Judas which had betrayed him—brought

again the *thirty pieces of silver* to the chief priests, and elders—and they bought with them the *potter's field*, &c. (Matt. xxvii. 3—8.) which was a most minute fulfilment of the striking prophecy.

God has thus fed the poor of the flock, the Gentiles with the staff BEAUTY, or the everlasting gospel, which he cut asunder from the Jews; whom he has left for many centuries, and who will never be restored till the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes!

We now enquire what we are to understand by the staff, BANDS, or binders. The Lord cut it asunder, that he might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. That is between Christ and the Jews: for "Our Lord sprang out of Judah."

1. God had for many hundreds of years, a people among the Jews, to whom his election of grace was almost entirely confined, but he had now accomplished that number there, consequently was not *bound* to them any longer as a God of grace. In like manner now, when God has by his preached gospel, gathered together his elect, by the instrumentality of his ministers, he withdraws the blessings of the gospel from that place, breaks up communion with that people, and sends his messenger to another: as he commanded Paul; "*Continue* here, for I have much people in this place:" they were his people, his sons and daughters, before they were called: for he says to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth:—Observe, they are his sons and daughters before he brings them home: to which he is bound with the BANDS of the everlasting covenant. These BANDS, or BINDERS, are the engagements of the ETERNAL THREE, in everlasting love, to save the elect with an eternal salvation.

1. The FATHER is engaged to bless them with the abundance of his pardon, and the fulness of his abounding grace.

2. The ETERNAL WORD engaged to take their nature into union with his divinity; to take their sins into his own account, and to be fully amenable for all their innumerable offences!

3. The HOLY SPIRIT *bound* himself to give them new

hearts ; to put his fear within them ; to comfort them with abounding consolations, and to sanctify them wholly by his sacred unction.

To accomplish which the faithfulness of a God is *bound*, and established in the heavens : and with these solemn **BANDS** he feeds the flock of slaughter.

I am farther asked, " who we are to understand by the **THREE SHEPHERDS**, who were cut off in one month." Some have thought they were their *princes, priests, and prophets*, which he certainly cut off, when the gospel was taken from them. But I consider they were the *three* particular sects, into which the Jews were religiously divided ; namely, the *Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians*, who, in order to establish their own pretended free-will, and creature-righteousness, unitedly and most maliciously persecuted the Lord Jesus Christ : " Their soul abhorred him, as was shockingly testified by the conduct of all **THREE**. And the soul of Christ " loathed them." To whom he said, I will not feed you ! that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off, &c. Ye believe not, because, ye are not of my sheep ! Seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive, and hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight ! No persons are so loathsome in the eyes of an infinitely holy and gracious God, as those who are " going about to establish their own righteousness," in opposition to Christ Jesus, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS !**

QUESTION

FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

The Difference between the immortal, and sinless principle communicated to every regenerated soul, and the Eternal and Divine Essence of the Creator ?

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