

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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

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Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.
Christ all and in all. COL. III. 11.

QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, MARCH 29, 1824.

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

SOLUTION.

THAT the *Creator* and the *creation* are two distinct objects; and that the former is infinitely superior to the latter, is a truth so self-evident; an *axiom* so indubitable; that I should suppose the person is not to be found, who, in his sober senses, would call it in question. The VAST UNIVERSE is nothing, and less than nothing, when compared with the immensity of the WONDERFUL ETERNAL, who spoke it into existence by the word of his all-creative power: Hence when we contemplate the *new creation*, and rejoice that we are the *workmanship* of the Holy Spirit, we must not claim *equality with God*, (the prerogative of

Christ alone) but fall on our faces, in the deepest humility, and acknowledge that *out* of his fulness we have received grace upon grace; and that instead of being *equal* with God, we are dependent upon that *all-sufficient* grace for perseverance, and are necessitated in every time of need to call on him, who will hear and answer us with the displays of his love, in giving us *more grace!*

By "the immortal and sinless principle," no doubt the Querist intends the good work of grace in the soul of a sinner, (Phil. i. 6.) and asks for the difference between this **NEW CREATURE**, and its **GREAT CREATOR**. In order to give an answer as *scriptural*, and as decisive as possible, upon the ground of Christian experience, I shall draw a Biblical portraiture of the **NEW CREATION**, and contrast it with the boundless superiority and unsearchable being of the **ETERNAL I AM!** who gave it existence; which he sustains, till the regenerated soul is brought to glory.

1. It is denominated a *broken heart*, (Psalm li. 17.) a broken spirit, a contrite heart, which is evidently the *new* heart, which the Lord, in covenant, engaged to give his people. For David, in the same Psalm, attributes it to the Lord: "Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which *thou hast broken* may rejoice." (verse 8.) An heart of real penitence and contrition, which, though pure in itself, sees and feels the opposition of the carnal mind, in all the workings of iniquity, and aboundings of corruption! It is the *spirit* of unfeigned humility, accompanied with a confession of sin at the foot of the cross; where the sinner puts his mouth in the dust, if so, there may be hope. Now the difference between this *produce* of grace, and the *essence* of the Creator must appear so strikingly clear to a child of God, as to supercede the necessity of all argument: for, while the sinner **REPENTS in dust and ashes**, (Job xlii. 6.) it is said of Jehovah, "God is not man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should **REPENT**." (Numb. xxiii. 19.) "And also the strength of Israel will not lie, nor **REPENT**: for he is not a man, that he should **REPENT**." (1 Sam. xv. 29.) He gives *repentance* unto Israel, that repentance is the *new nature*, between which and the Eternal Essence, there is as much difference as there possibly can be, between a poor penitent sinner, and the Eternal Jehovah!

2. It consists of a conscience purged from sin by the blood of Christ: "For we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. x. 19—22.) This *good and pure conscience*, is (as the word *conscience* means) *a knowledge within us, or within us*, of the effects of the atonement, in removing all our sins, and presenting us without spot or blemish, not as so many *deities*, but as unworthy sinners, saved by grace, before him who is GOD ALONE; and between whom and a sinner, thus saved by blood, there is as much difference, as between the sinner, who cries *unworthy and unclean*, and is accepted only through the atonement of the beloved, and the Infinitely Holy God, who fills boundless space, with his universal presence!

3. It is a *revelation* of Christ made *in* the sinner by the Holy Comforter. Saith Paul, "It pleased God—to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen" (Gal. i. 15, 16.) This REVELATION of Christ, and Christ possessing the ETERNAL ESSENCE, are indisputably *two*. *It is CHRIST in you*, believer, the *hope of glory*, not putting you in possession of his *UNSEARCHABLE ESSENCE*, that you may strut about in the detestable pride of your heart, and say *I am omnipotent!*" Horribly awful expression to proceed from the lips of a worm of the earth! But, dear Believer! he is in you, that is, *revealed* in you, as the scripture already quoted proves, the *hope of glory*. The Holy Comforter *speaks of him*, takes of the *things* of Christ, and shews unto you: thus you have *hope*, through the teaching of the Spirit, and know as much of Jesus, as he is pleased to *communicate!*

Say not then, presumptuously say not, I am OMNIPOTENT! But bow rather with humility, before the Blessed Comforter, and say, Lord I know nothing as I ought to know, O do thou teach me! There is evidently as much difference between INFINITE ESSENCE, and the poor sinner taught of God, as between the humble *pupil*, and the Great Teacher of Israel, concerning whom it is said, "None teacheth like him!" "It is the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*" Knowledge *imparted*. It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart: *revealed*,

impressed; and so governing the *new man*, that he loves God, because he first loved him!

4. It is the law of God written upon the table of the heart. And let me beseech you, at least to attempt to distinguish between the Eternal God, and the law which he has written; which is the law of the mind, in opposition to the law of sin. (Rom. vii. 23.) And that the law of the mind is not omnipotent, is evident, for it calls daily for a gracious influence from above, to carry it into effect against sin. Hence the promise, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Why? because you can *omnipotently* conquer it. No! Poor *worm* Jacob! but because you are under *grace*; and that grace is not *in you*, but in Christ! You must go entirely *out of yourself* for it: according to the exhortation; "Thou, therefore, my Son be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. ii. 1.) The difference, then, between that soul-humbling work of grace and the Eternal God, is that grace teaches you to acknowledge that you are nothing in yourself but *weakness*, and leads you entirely out of yourself, to the Lord Jehovah, in whom you have righteousness and strength!

5. The word of Christ dwelling in you richly in all wisdom, (Col. iii. 16.) "which came not unto you in word, only, but also in power, and in much assurance, and in the Holy Ghost." The word was applied with divine power, and it became unto you, the word of Christ, the word of reconciliation, the word of Truth, and the gracious word of promise: but there is as much difference between the word spoken home to your heart, in gracious declarations of pardon and justification, and the Divine Essence, as there is between the Omnipotent Speaker, and the salvation spoken to your soul! Learn, then, to distinguish between the Eternal God, and his peace-proclaiming word; and thankfully adore him, that "your ear hath heard a word behind you, saying This is the way, walk ye in it."

6. It is FAITH of the *operation* of God: not God *himself*; but his WORK. For were the faith of God's elect the ETERNAL ESSENCE, it would be impossible that there should be any *degrees* of faith: but we *read*, and to our shame we read it, "O ye of *little* faith!" Hence the apostolic prayer, "Lord *increase* our faith!" Can God himself know any *increase*? Grace forbid, that we should draw such an infa-

mous conclusion! Then, as God can know neither increase, change, nor diminution, and *little* and *weak* faith is *increased* by a spiritual growth, to *great* and *strong* faith, we may fairly, because scripturally, conclude, that faith cannot be the *DIVINE ESSENCE*. There is as much difference between our faith, credence, or confidence in God, and its great and gracious operator, giver and object, as between “a *persuasion* of mind which *cometh* from him who calleth us,” and the Lord “Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.” For *faith is the substance* (not of God himself) but of THINGS HOPED FOR! and if you will give yourselves time to distinguish between God, and THE THINGS which he has prepared for, and promised to his people, you must clearly discern between God and his precious *gift of faith!*

7. *Hope*; which springs from faith: as faith has to do with the promises, and receives them with an assurance of their fulfilment, founded on the divine faithfulness, so hope looks forward to the enjoyment of the things promised, and waiteth for them, with patience, (Rom. viii. 25.) but this hope must be inferior to its great Author and object, Christ Jesus our Lord: for when faith and hope shall *cease* in full enjoyment, Christ Jesus will *remain*, the altogether lovely object, of our everlasting adoration: besides, the apostle says, that *love is greater* than either *faith* or *hope*: so that if you deify faith and hope, they are but inferior deities, compared with love which never fails. (1 Cor. xiii. 13.)

These three, faith, hope, and love dwell in our hearts: but “God is *greater* than our hearts, (1 John iii 21.) and *knoweth* all thing; whereas with all our faith, hope, and charity, we know not what a day may bring forth. Then the difference between the *essence* of the Eternal God and these, evidently is, that he is their CREATOR, and they his *creation*, the produce of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, instead of *deifying* yourselves on account of your faith, fall before him as his *new* creatures, and bless him for that *portion* of grace which you have received!

This divine work in the soul is farther denominated,

1. The *new man*, CREATED in righteousness and *true* holiness. Not a new GOD, but a new MAN, which if we had not another scripture, is alone sufficient to overturn completely all the sophistry that can be employed to prove

believers, *deities* equal with God! The idea shocks me as I proceed, that there ever should be found persons on the earth that should dare to claim equality with God over all blessed for ever! dwelling in his own Eternity, and possessing an Infinite and boundless Essence immeasurably exalted above all his *creatures*, angels and glorified saints!

2. *A new creation.* The contrivance of Infinite Wisdom in the covenant of grace; a work to be carried into effect by the blessed Comforter, in due and appointed time, in consequence of redemption by the precious blood of the exalted Lamb of God!

In this *creation* the power of the Spirit is exerted, his love displayed, the softening influences of his grace distill like the dew upon the tender herbs: the enemy of the heart to God is subdued, light divine illumines the mind, and life animates the whole of his glorious work, and he pronounces it good, beautiful, delightful in his eyes! for the sinner is led of the Spirit to live a life of faith on the Son of God. The difference between this divine and exquisite workmanship and the Eternal Essence of Jehovah is precisely that between the Great CREATOR and the *Creation* of the world: for both *creations* are the produce of the wonderful energy of his *inimitable, unequalled* and ALMIGHTY POWER!

3. It is a spiritual birth—*Born from above!*

Is the beautiful expression of our dear Lord, figuratively to exhibit the benign work of the Holy Spirit. They are *begotten* of God and brought forth in Sion for “Of Sion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her.” (Psalm lxxxvii. 4.) On this ground it has been most ignorantly asked, does not a son partake of the *very essence* of the father who beget him? If so, the child of God partakes of the *very essence* of God his Father.” This is, indeed, to carnalize the scriptures, to divest them of their figurative excellencies, and to reduce the Almighty to a level with his creature man! For if I may ask, without putting your common sense to the blush, I ask, does God *carnally* beget his children, and are they *carnally* brought forth? If so, (I would speak with reverence) the world in the course of time would be furnished with an innumerable company of gods!

But let us pursue our subject *spiritually*, and leave carnal arguments for the service of carnal men. The terms

are strikingly figurative, and serve to set forth, through the medium of earthly things, the great work of the Spirit, which none but the spiritual man can discern.

The new man is begotten of God when the *dead* sinner is quickened and made alive. The law enters with all the authority of offended justice, sin revives in the sinners feelings, and becomes exceeding sinful, and he dies to all hope of salvation by the deeds of the law! *Sinai* is no place of refuge from the avenger of blood! All refuge fails! But blessed be the Eternal Spirit, he turns his face Sion-ward, and his longing eyes are fixed on Jesus and his blood!—The soul travails in birth with numerous fears and perplexities, yet a blessed hope sustains it, till the time, the auspicious day of Christ arrives, when perfect love casteth out all fear, and the *new man* of the soul is *born*, or brought forth into the glorious *liberty* of the sons of God, where with Christ hath made them free!

Let us further notice,

1. That it is denominated a *begun* work, (Phil i. 6.) They are little children, new born babes who desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may *grow* thereby; lambs that must be fed with peculiar care and tenderness; lambs gathered with the Great Shepherd's arm and nourished in His bosom. But with the *Eternal Essence* there is no *beginning*, no *growth*, no need of *care*, for he careth for us!

They are first little children who grow in grace, then young men strong in faith; then fathers who spiritually beget, through the work of the ministry, souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. But all this amounts not to their possession of the *Essence* of God, whose glory the heaven of heavens cannot contain!

2. That no *man* ever possessed, all the fulness of the Godhead save the man Christ Jesus. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness, dwell," all the fulness of grace, and all the fulness of the *Eternal Essence*! The Spirit without measure was poured out on our adorable Redeemer! Then, O presumptuous man, rob not my dear Lord of this essential and distinguishing glory, by attributing that to yourself which belongs to Jesus alone! Hear the determination of the Father; My glory I will not give to another!

3. The apostles were baptised, or overwhelmed with the

Holy Ghost at the day of Penticost ; but they had not the Eternal Divinity ; or they might have been worshipped, which Peter forbade Cornelius to do ; saying, “ Stand up I myself am a man ! ” All that they miraculously performed was not in their own name, nor by their own power ; but in the name of Jesus of Nazareth ; by faith in his name they could do all things : yet he gave them that faith, and *strengthened* them with all might, by his Spirit, in their inward man !

4. We are called with the same holy calling, and are interested in all the everlasting blessings of the Covenant equally with them, but have only the common gifts of that Eternal Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he will. Instead of having the perfect Essence of God we need more grace, and he will give it, for he resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble.—

5. In all the gracious lessons which the *third* subsistence in the *UNDIVIDED ESSENCE* teaches the Israel of God, he speaks not of himself, nor directs them to speak of *themselves*, except in the most humble terms : for *HE* shall speak of *ME*, saith the Dear Redeemer ; and in speaking of the Exalted Christ, their object of delightful worship, he animates their hearts with the unspeakable joy of faith, so that they unitedly and individually, “ worship God in the Spirit, rejoice *alone* in Christ. Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ! ” For knowledge puffeth up, with an idea of *Christian* and *personal greatness* ; but love edifieth, and prostrates the sinner most humbly at the foot of the cross !

**AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE
QUESTION**

*Was proposed through want of time, and bodily indisposition
of the Speaker, to*

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No. XIII.] SATURDAY, APRIL, 10, 1824. [Price 2d.

Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν πανί Χριστός.—PAUL.
Christ all and in all. COL. III. 11.

AN ADJOURNED QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1824.

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

SOLUTION.

O FOR an “angel’s ken!”—for “thoughts that breathe and words that burn,” to comprehend a *little* so far as comprehensible by mortals, of the GREAT and GLORIOUS BEING by whom we live and move; and to set forth his praise, by descriptions of his Divinely August Majesty, till in wonder mingled with love, we fall adoringly before his Eternal Throne, and acknowledge that we are nothing, and less than nothing, compared with that boundless ocean without shores; that existence without beginning and without end; that underived and self-existing power, which is denominated the ESSENCE OF GOD! Or rather, O thou source of all intelligence, Eternal Spirit of Truth, who art engaged to teach thy people, illumine with beams of divine understanding, my dark benighted powers, that in thy light, I may see light, and *survey* with solemn awe, and profound reverence, thine Infinite Existence, thine unbounded ESSENCE!

Where shall I commence my description! How begin to delineate the boundless attributes of the Unsearchable! Astronomers read the starry heavens with familiarity, and in that “book of God before them set,” the celestial phe-

nomena, they discover the wonderful works of the Great Architect; yet those are but the "work of his fingers;" even when soaring in research, beyond the limits of the SOLAR SYSTEM, and surveying the *fixed stars*, as so many central suns to other systems of planets, they are but in the suburbs of the wonderful creation, and behold but shadows of him who dwells in light inaccessible! for,

"These are his *lowliest* works, yet these declare,
His goodness beyond thought, and power divine!"

Mathematicians have made admirable calculations and admeasurements of the vast creation of God; chemists have dissected the very bowels of nature, and traced back effects to their various causes with admirable skill; but after all their laborious studies, deep researches, and ingenious experiments, they have but discovered the productions of the *Infinite Wisdom* of HIM, whose name, and whose ESSENCE are still UNSEARCHABLE!

His wisdom, immense goodness, and uncontrollable power, are displayed in his beautiful, and wonderful creation: but it is the province of the Holy Scriptures, to reveal his grace, and the work of the Holy Spirit to display and exhibit to the Christian's view, the glories, riches, power, and abundance of that grace shining in the face of Jesus Christ! To that delightful volume, then, I shall appeal and refer, in giving a short description of the ESSENCE OF GOD!

O may humility, in an especial manner, take the lead in our contemplations, that while we venture to survey even the ETERNAL BEING, we may fall on our faces before him, and bless him for that *little* knowledge, which he has given us of himself, with an expectation of more grace; still remembering that we are *frail* and but *dust*: and that the hidden man of our heart is his *work*, and not his *essence*: rejoicing in hope, that he who hath begun that *good work of grace*, will carry it on to the day of Christ!

1. ESSENCE, literally implies BEING; I suppose from the verb *esse*, to *be*, to *exist*, to live. Hence the glorious name by which our *Alehim*, or covenant God, has revealed himself, JEHOVAH; (from the verb *hajjah*, to be) SELF-EXISTENCE, UNDERIVED, BOUNDLESS, and ETERNAL! Life of all lives, Creator of all other *essences* or *existencies*; dwelling ALONE, as the Universal Parent of all his creatures, angels, and men; from whom they derived all that they are and all that they possess! Hence the following sublime ad-

dress : " That men may know that thou, whose name *alone* is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." (Psalm lxxxiii. 18.) " Who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." (Acts xvii. 25.) " To whom then will you liken me, saith the Lord ?" All creatures are but his OFFSPRING, from the very first dawn of time to the consummation of all things. O ye, who labor under the shocking delusion of being in yourselves GODS, possessing the very *essence* or *undervived*, and *eternal being* of Jehovah ; who vainly say, in the pride of your hearts, we are *omnipotent* ! Hear the following solemn interrogatives of God, and tremble for yourselves, ye *haughty worms* ! " *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth ?* declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest ? or who hath stretched out the line upon it ?" (Job xxxviii. 4, 5)

If it is nothing short of the Divine Essence which you possess, and that Essence *created* the world, you must have a perfect knowledge of the power, nay you possess the very *power* which created it ? and must have the most *perfect* recollection of the exertion of that power in the achievement of the great work of CREATION !—O what an awful combination of ignorance and pride, in that person, who presumes to possess the very Being of God ! Aspiring ambition in the human heart, dictates *acts* and *language* against the Most High, in direct imitation of the fallen angels ;—POPE well remarks,

" Pride still is aiming at the bless'd abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods !"

But man, proud man, seems not satisfied now o' days, with angelic greatness, (admitting he could arrive at it) but he, assuming the place of God, saith that he is God ! 2 Thess. ii. 4.) Surely, this must be the awful device of the serpent, who beguiled Eve : His very first temptation was, " Ye shall be as the ALEHIM, as God himself !"

The DIVINE ESSENCE of Jehovah is OMNIPOTENCE, OMNISCIENCE, and OMNIPRESENCE. Almighty, and all-creative in power, by which he performs with perfect ease, (only by speaking the word) things, which to man are utter impossibilities ! Occupying an immensity of space with his presence, HE, the Infinite God, surveys every object at one and the same time, from the minutest animalcula on this little globe, to *huge* Jupiter, or the most ponderous

orb, in the yet unexplored and immeasurably distant regions of the starry concave! From everlasting to everlasting, immutably the same: To his existence, no time can possibly attach itself, "For he is *eternal*, the very Father of Eternity itself!" (Isaiah ix. 6.)

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is **HIGH**; I cannot **ATTAIN** unto it! Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psalm cxxxix. 6, 7.)

David was so very far from presuming to possess in himself, the Eternal Essence, that he most humbly acknowledges before God, that he could not, in the uttermost energy and extent of his most illumined and spiritual thoughts on Deity, *attain* unto a clear comprehension of its astonishing Immensity! And such will be the frank and humble acknowledgment, of every one who has received a *measure* of infinitely free-grace, out of the **FOUNTAIN** fulness of Christ; who *alone* received the Spirit without *measure*, and who *alone* can, without robbery, claim *equality*, or the same boundless Essence, with our covenant God and Father!

But it may be replied, "Peter positively says, we are made partakers of the Divine Nature." (2 Pet. i. 4.) True, but he neither says, nor intends to say, "We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, (or Essence) of God. We must ask what divine, or *heavenly* nature, is intended. Not God's *underived* and *eternal* nature: if so we should be all Eternal Deities! But it is that *divine*, in contra-distinction to *carnal nature*, which we received by, or through, the precious promises: in fulfilment of which, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, to apply them powerfully, and to pour out divine grace, that we might cry **ABBA**, Father, through a participation of that *spiritual nature*, of which his people all partake, and which is the *spirit*, or the *new man*, that is continually hostile to the flesh: hence the experimental account of Paul, "to be carnally minded is death, but to be *spiritually* minded, is life and peace." But this *spiritual mind*, or *divine nature*, is so far from being Jehovah's very *essence increate*, that it is "*created* in righteousness and true holiness!"

"God is love, and he, who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." But how does God dwell in him? By the power of his sin-subduing grace, by the sprink-

ling of blood on the conscience, and by *faith*, which is not HIMSELF, but his *gift* : God is *love*, but the sinner is *not* ;— he is liberated from legal bondage, by the *knowledge* of God's love, which yet, with him, passes all knowledge.— (Eph. iii. 17—19) Jehovah *declares* his love to the soul, and thus *draws* it to himself. “ I have loved thee with everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. xxxi. 3.) The love of God is shed abroad in the heart, (Rom. v. 5.) diffused with the richest perfumes, as the unction from the HOLY ONE : or brought home, as heavenly delicacies, on which the soul rapturously feasts ; exclaiming with astonishment, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us ; that we should be called the sons of God ! ” (John iii. 1.)

But for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith ; to possess a knowledge of the love of God ; to be drawn by its cords, and to feel that it is shed abroad in the heart, are so far from being God *himself* that they are only the *effects* of a display of the great love, wherewith he ever loved us, and will love us to all eternity ! Humble Christian ! or poor sinner ! (which are synonymous) you, who are every moment dependent on grace for your perseverance, I would apply to you for an experimental detail of the love of God to your immortal soul. Do you feel an *eternal source* of overflowing love in your *new* or *divine* nature, to your God ? Alas ! no : you lament that your love to him is so *little*, who has loved you so *much*, that your *love* scarcely deserves the engaging name, when brought before that Eternal Flame of his love to you ! Instead of boasting, then, that you have the Eternal Essence of love to God, you are led humbly to acknowledge that you are indebted to the Holy Spirit daily, for fresh supplies of love ! Your love to him, is, in its very nature, the *love* of a *poor sinner*, excited by a knowledge of salvation : whereas, his is the boundless, everlasting, and immutable love of an infinitely Holy God ! Your song of praise is not unto yourself, for your mighty, and wonderful love to Jehovah : but when led to worship, within the veil, under the influence of “ the spirit of praise,” you join the ransomed of the Lord, in their rapturous song of admiration, “ Unto HIM, who hath loved us, &c.” This tune goes merrily, every note echoes “ not unto us not unto us”—and though God hath worked all our works in us, and still *worketh* in us, both to will and

to do of his good pleasure—we will not so much rejoice in these manifestations and inward earnestness of the Spirit to our salvation, but rather in the great and wonderful salvation itself, by the blood of Jesus. “ I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me !”

“ The Spirit wrought my faith and love,
And hope and every grace ;
But Jesus spent his life, to work
The robe of Righteousness !

It must strike every humble sinner, saved thus by the bleeding Lamb, that the difference between WORM JACOB, and his Infinite God is never to be fully conceived of by CREATED BEINGS !

It is an immeasurable disparity ! Infinite extremes ! for surely you who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, want no persuasion from me to acknowledge,

1. That the new man derived his very *existence* from the gracious work of Him, who has put his fear in our hearts : whereas the Essence of Jehovah, is *underived*, peculiar to itself, in the moods of its unequalled existence : Father, Word, and Holy Spirit, THREE, yet but One ! JEHOVAH, the Alehim of Israel, who only does wonderful things !

2. The new man acknowledges that Christ is made over unto him WISDOM, as well as righteousness and strength : he goes out of himself, and asks of God, who giveth to all men (all *regenerated men*,) liberally, who acknowledge that they *lack wisdom* : but the Divine Essence, or Divine Being, cannot *lack wisdom* : he saith, with an uncontrollable prerogative, “ Council is mine, and sound *wisdom* : I am understanding : I have strength !” (Prov. viii. 14.)

3. The work of grace in the soul is but a *begun work*, but with the Divine Essence there is no *beginning* !

4. The Christian must be daily renewed, and receive fresh vigor from the fountain of Christ : he prays to be strengthened with all might, by the Holy Spirit, in his inner man ; but the Divine Essence is strength itself. “ I am strength,” saith the Eternal God. Strength *underived*, undeclining, undecaying through eternal ages ! “ In the Lord Jehovah, there is *everlasting strength* !”

5. The new and hidden man of the heart cannot *keep* himself; Where then is his Omnipotence? We, dear Christians! are constrained to acknowledge that we are *kept* by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, (1 Pet. i. 5.) kept "from legions of devils, and mountains of sin." Beneath us are the *everlasting arms*, without which we should fall a prey to our enemies (Deut. xxxiii.) but the Eternal God is our refuge, who shall *guide* us by his council, till he receives us to eternal glory.—The Divine *Essence*, or Being, needs no *keeping*, for he *keepeth* Israel; no upholding; for he upholdeth us with the right hand of his righteousness; no council, for he performeth all things after the council of his own will; no *guidance*, for he will be our God and guide unto death! no *instruction*, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may *instruct* him? Whereas the new man needs the daily *tuition* of the blessed Comforter; of which he shall not be destitute," "For it is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God."

6. The new man "sometimes walks in darkness and hath no light." The Lord is pleased to withdraw the light of his gracious countenance, and the soul exclaims "thou hidest thy face and I am troubled!" but the *Infinite Essence* is a fountain of ineffable light! "God is light and in *him* there is no darkness at all!"

7. The new *man*, or the divine nature of the Christian, knoweth *changes*; sometimes strong in faith, saying, "I am not afraid of ten thousand of them, who have set themselves against me, round about," and anon, is alarmed at the appearance of a single opponent; David like, fearfully crying, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul!" But the *ESSENCE*, or Divine Being, "knoweth not the shadow of a turn," his language is, "I am the Lord, I CHANGE NOT!"

8. The new man is frequently *faint* and *weary*: the road in which he travels is rough and rugged to his feet, and walking through the valley of the shadow of death—when spiritual death overshadows the soul, and the powers of hell assail him—he is *ready to halt*, till the Holy Spirit, who feeds his strength, enables him to say, by precious faith,—“Thou art with me, and thy rod and staff they comfort me.” But the Divine Essence, or “The everlasting God the Lord FAINTEH not, neither is WEARY.—There is no searching of his understanding.” (Isa. xl. 28.)

9. The new man is tempted of evil, but the *Divine Essence*, or God, cannot be tempted of evil, (James i. 13.) and though the *new* or *divine nature* of the believer, cannot be polluted of evil; yet he feels the necessity of crying unto him, who knoweth how to succour the Godly, in all their temptations!

The difference is so great, and conspicuous, that it would be superfluous to multiply scriptural arguments, any farther to convince you, who are *open to conviction*, that the **ONE** is,

1. A poor *petitioner* at the gate of mercy, begging for the bread of life: the **OTHER** the Eternal God, with the unsearchable riches of grace, able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

2. The one a poor *prisoner*, sighing for liberty, the other the King Eternal, who will bring his prisoners out of prison!

3. The *one* "knows not what a day may bring forth," from whom futurity is hidden, and to whom unexpected events almost daily arise; the **OTHER**, the Omniscient Essence, who governs all events, and to whom all things are nakedly open from everlasting to everlasting!

4. The *one*, incapable of reading the hearts of men: and is daily exposed to human deception: the **OTHER**, the Divine Essence, the **GREAT SEARCHER OF HEARTS**!

5. The *one*, a *humble* worshipper, who worships the Lord in spirit and in truth; the *other*, the **ONLY** object of all worship, praise, and adoration!

6. The *one* an humble learner, ever desirous of learning more of the excellency of Christ; the **OTHER**, the Great Teacher of Israel, who manifests himself unto his people!

7. The *one*, a *servant*, serving in the newness of Spirit, the *other*, the *Great Master of Assemblies*, whose worship and service is perfect freedom!

8. The *one*, a *worm*, the *other*, the Eternal God!

9. The *one*, (comparatively) nothing, the *other*, **ALL IN ALL**!

ERRATUM.—No. XII. page 96, line 25, for Christian, read Christ.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

Are the first SIX verses of the SIXTH chapter of the Hebrews, descriptive of mere professors of Christianity, or of the elect family of God?

BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

No. XIV.] SATURDAY, APRIL, 17, 1824. [Price 2d.

Τα πάντα καὶ ἐν πανὶ Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

QUESTION

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, APRIL 12, 1824.

Are the first SIX verses of the SIXTH chapter of the Hebrews, descriptive of mere professors of Christianity, or of the elect family of God?

SOLUTION.

VARIOUS opinions have been formed of the intention of the Holy Spirit in this seemingly difficult portion of God's word, and laid before the public for their reception, adoption, or rejection.

1. The *Arminian* roundly asserts, that he has thereon, the most extensive ground for belief and evidence, that subjects of regenerating grace; the truly called children of God; may *fall finally* from the loving-kindness of the Lord, and after all they have known and enjoyed of his presence, be everlastingly banished from him, and sink in eternal perdition!

But this doctrine is not more horrid to the true Christian's feelings, than shockingly degrading to the immutability of our God, who knows not the *shadow of a turn!* How can he, who is eternally unalterable, hate to-day and love to-morrow! or bless to-day, and curse to-morrow!—Alas! were this the case, we could place no dependence on the word of his promise, nor safely exercise faith in his

abounding grace, in our precious and immovable rock, Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !

But everlasting adorations are due to his glorious name from all his *blood-bought* elect : That his family were elected and adopted from everlasting, and in the ancient, well-ordered, and gracious covenant, made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ : in consequence of which, he redeemed from all iniquity, all, and every individual of that family, with an especial and distinguishing redemption : and not till his blood has lost its virtue to cleanse from all sin, shall an individual sinner perish, belonging to that flock made his by the Father's gift ! Dear believer, it perfectly satisfies us to hear him say, " I give unto them **ETERNAL LIFE**, and they shall **NEVER PERISH**, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand !"

2. The *Anti-Arminian*, on the opposite, as strenuously contends, that the striking description here given, cannot apply to the *called* of God, according to his purpose ; who cannot possibly fall ; as they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation : whereas, the other declares, that the persons described, may *fall*, so as to render their restoration unto repentance, impossible !"—hence, they justify themselves in concluding, that mere professors of Christianity, with shining attainments, or sordid hypocrites, are evidently described !

3. A *third* party, namely the weak and timid of Jehovah's family, from the above conclusion, are plunged the deeper in their fears and doubts, concerning their personal interest in Christ ; and most painfully question, whether they are effectually called by divine grace. I have their relief and comfort particularly in view, in my attempt at a satisfactory elucidation of this precious portion of God's word : which must not be taken from his children : for I venture, at once, to pronounce it one of the most extensive, accurate, circumstantial, and precious descriptions of *regeneration*, in the whole Book of Sacred Inspiration !

1. Let us run briefly through the whole of the account, with observations on the force and energy of the **GREEK TEXT**.

Τους φωτισθησας (aor. 1. part. pass. pl. *verbi φωτίζω illumino*, to enlighten, to illuminate) *they have been illuminated.*

And let it particularly arrest attention, that this was a *passive*; they did not *illuminate* themselves; but were *illuminated*: Who illuminated them? “God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shone into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ!”

Mere professors are self-taught, and self-illuminated;—their *doctrinal* knowledge is of their own *procuring*; by the dint of studious application to the scriptures: but these, on the contrary, have been enlightened, not by themselves, but by some other agency, operating in their immortal minds: and is it not the prerogative of the Holy Spirit alone, “to bring them out of darkness, into marvellous light?”

ΑΠΑΞ *adv.* SEMEL, *once*, at one time, *once for all*;—having been once *illuminated*, they are not, when they are fallen to be restored by *repentance*; *repentance* from dead works: they are not to be regenerated over again; for that work stands for ever, however the child of God may fall. You will perceive, I hope, that the apostle is not speaking of the impossibility of their restoration, but of the impossibility of restoring them by legal *repentance*! The *manner* of restoring them, is the subject of his discussion. Hence he says, in the first verse “Let us go on unto perfection: not *laying* again the foundation of repentance from dead works.” That has been laid *once*: For it is impossible, says he, to renew them *again*, (*again*, observe that particularly) they had, then, been renewed once; and if fallen, cannot be restored by law *terrors*, but Peter-like, by the soul-dissolving looks of bleeding love from Calvary!

Γευσαμενος (part. act. pl. *verbi γεύω gusto* to taste) *having tasted*. This is scripturally sufficient to prove them regenerated children of God: according to Peter’s encouraging language: “If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Pet. ii. 3.) If you have had but *one taste*, poor sinner—but one sweet enjoyment of his *free grace*, which encouraged your hope, you differ from all the hypocrites in the world, concerning whom the great Lord of the gospel feast, has declared, “They shall not taste of my supper!”

Τῆς οὐρανοῦ (Gen. sing. of οὐρανοῦ *cælestis*, celestial, hea-

venly, of or belonging to God; far above the reach of men. That which is not of the earth, earthy, but that which comes from heaven, according to the answer of Jesus, to Peter's confession of faith, "Flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

Της δωρεας (Gen. sing. of δωρεα, *donum, donatio*, a gift, a donation, a *free-giving*, or *bestowing*. That which comes from heaven, as Jehovah's free gift, which is precious faith in the blood of Christ.

Γεννηθεντας μετοχους *were made companions, partners, associates*, of the Holy Spirit. For the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the COMMUNION of the HOLY SPIRIT is with them. (2 Cor. xiii. 14.

The act of the persons so made partakers, or *associates*, is not even mentioned: but the great work of God, who alone can make a sinner acquainted with "the love of the Spirit." Hence, no formalist or hypocrite, with whom God has nothing to do, can possibly be intended in this sublime expression: but those alone who are brought into the sweetest intimacy with the HOLY COMFORTER, under the balmy influence of his own omnipotent agency!

Having tasted, Καλον, *pulcher, bonus*; the beautiful, excellent, glorious, good, Ρημα Θεου, *verbum Dei*, word of God.

The word ρημα, deserves an especial observation; as it is not the Greek word usually employed in the New Testament to express the WORD of God. For the Eternal and Incarnate Word, the written word, and the preached word of salvation, are almost universally expressed throughout the Scriptures of the NEW Testament, by λογος (vide John i. 18. Acts xiii. 26 and xx. 32. 2 Tim. iv. 2. &c.

But ρημα, the *word* in this sentence, evidently intends that word, which God himself, by the still small voice of his Spirit, speaks home to the soul of a sinner, when he proclaims pardon and peace to an individual soul, through an internal application of the blood of Christ.

This sense is fully expressed by SUIDAS, "Ρημα, *verbum. Verbum autem vocatur verbalis vox simpliciter enunciata.*" And Christ himself uses the same noun, and in the same sense, in John vi. 63. τα ρηματα, *the words* which I speak unto you, they are life." I would ask, Does Christ speak

spirit and life into the soul of a mere professor, or a deceived and deceiving hypocrite? Certainly not. Then, not such characters; but the saints of God called by divine grace, must unavoidably be intended in this portion of his word. Their ears are circumcised to hear his charming voice, and they follow the Great Shepherd with the most accurate and delightful attention; “for they know his voice.”

“*And the powers of the world to come.*” The world of grace and glory, love, and inexpressible delight. These they taste and anticipate while here below: feeling the power of his love and grace to save them from the world, the flesh, and the devil: and the power of innate prayer, leading to communion with God! And are these *celestial powers*, felt and experienced by any persons on earth, except those who are called effectually, to rejoice in hope of the glory of God?

We are now arrived at that part of the subject, on which a decisive reply to the question much depends: viz. THE FALLING AWAY, and the RECOVERY OR RESTORATION.

1. Παρὰ πεισθησάντων (a participle *verbi παρὰ πεισθησάντων* *pro labor*, to fall, to slip; *pecco*, to do amiss, to mistake) *having fallen*.

2. And having *fallen*, it is impossible to renew them again, or to restore, and bring them back *εἰς μετάνοιαν*, *into*, or *by* repentance. Let it impress your minds, that the apostle does not say, it is impossible to renew them *by any* means *whatever*; they are irretrievably fallen; *fallen*, to rise no more at all! But he says, as clearly as he can possibly speak, or write words. “It is impossible to restore, renew, refresh, recover, and bring back, the wandering sheep of Christ, *by repentance*; by threatenings of vengeance, and penal afflictions when they return home—We must not send Moses after them with his law terrors! We must not hope to bring them back by such a vindictive measure. Besides in the attempt to perform this *impossibility* to restore them *by repentance*; we are not “*going on to perfection*: but laying again the foundation of *repentance* from dead works.” The fallen children of God are peculiar characters: they are still the *regenerated* of the Lord; and instead of preaching to them legal repentance, we must point them to that infinitely precious, and merciful High Priest, Christ Jesus, whom they have “*crucified*

afresh," and then, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, a view of his bleeding, and *still* pardoning love! would lead to such a sense of their base and ungrateful conduct in deserting him, that they would weep bitterly, at the foot of his cross!

3. Concerning FALLING AWAY; by an attention to the sacred volume, on the painful subject, we shall be led to discriminate between the *falls* of mere professors, and those of the subjects of Jehovah's abounding grace. "For a just man *falleth* seven times and riseth up again, but the wicked shall *fall into* mischief." (Prov. xxiv. 16.) Here is distinguishing grace: seven times, the just (who are *justified* in Jesus) are restored; for "*their* life is in them;" they cannot fall out of the covenant of the Redeemer's love; but the *wicked*, who never were regenerated, fall from their profession (for the root of the matter is not in them) and answer finally, to the apostolic description; "*Twice* dead plucked up by the roots!" And thus, false teachers, or blind leaders, will soon share the fate of their deluded hearers: "For if the blind lead the blind, both shall *fall into* the ditch!" (Matt. xv. 14.)

4. It is my province now, consistently with the promised solution, to shew you scripturally the especial and distinguishing FALLS which are lamentably experienced by the people of God; to which they are all exposed, and from which they cannot preserve themselves. Some are kept abundantly more than others, to their abounding consolation, and the glory of grace! For in proportion as they are left to fall, and sin against, and wander from him who has called them, so will they pierce their own souls through, with many sorrows, wound their own consciences, and create for themselves, a very hell of guilt and misery!

So hateful is sin to the ransomed sinner, that his daily prayer is, "Lord keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me." This is the holy cry of the NEW MAN! but, Christians, we should ever remember, that the OLD MAN of our corrupt nature still lives: hence we are always liable to yield to the very first temptation, if not kept by the power of God! And for *wise ends*, Jehovah has left some of the most eminent characters among his Royal Sons and Daughters to *fall away*! But blessed be his name, not FINALLY! For on their *restoration* they have all sung the song of Da-

vid: "He **RESTORETH MY SOUL!** He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm xxiii. 3.)

1. They *fall* into temptations: but, it is so very far from criminal to be tempted, that James gives an exhortation to rejoice on the occasion: "My brethren, says he, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations: (James i. 2.) though by temptations here, we are rather to understand severe and varied *trials!* for the man, who (according to verse 12,) *endures* them, patiently waiting by faith, for God's deliverance out of them, is pronounced **BLESSED!**

2. There is a particular time with them all, I believe, when they leave their **FIRST** love, and are affectionately exhorted to remember from whence they are *fallen*. (Rev. ii. 3, 5.) The love of their espousals, when Christ the bridegroom is **FIRST** revealed, to the liberation of their souls from guilt, wrath, bondage, death, and condemnation.—That unspeakably felicitous season of heavenly sweetness, when sorrow is converted to joy, and mourning to enchanting melodies of celestial praise. When "I **KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH,**" is the *solo* of the individual soul, from morning to night! But in a short space, a *fall* takes place; and instead of joy and dancing, life, light, and pleasure; they feel the miserable reverse, of sadness, and inactivity, spiritual deadness, darkness, and innate pain of mind! But this *fall* is appointed by Infinite wisdom to wean the sucking child from the milk, that it may in future live on *gospel bread*, and walk by faith.

3. Through the specious plausibility of error, and their carnal nature's attachment to legality! they are likely enough, prior to their being rooted and grounded in the truth, to fall from their steadfastness: for *seducers* shall so wonderfully resemble the true ministers of Christ, "that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect."—But blessed be the Great Teacher of Israel, for that impossibility; that though the elect may be led away from truth for a season, they shall remember from whence they are fallen, and *return* to Zion and to God, with full purpose of heart!

4. But here more especially they *fall* "by their iniquities!" (Hosea xiv. 1.) Lust conceives in their carnal nature, and brings forth sin; and sin, when finished, brings forth death! Spiritual death, deadness, carelessness and

inattention to the ways and worship of God! The alluring charms of the world invite, they fall into its arms, and are lulled to sleep by the influence of sin, and the delusions of the devil! But the Lord will restore his fallen, as well as his backsliding children: Peter *falls* into the Satanic sieve, but a look of *love* restores him! For when the child of God falls he is not alone: Hence Solomon, (Eccl. iv. 9, 10.) “Two are better than one—for if they fall; the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him who is alone when he *falleth*.”

Thus, when the poor child of God *falls*, he has still Christ with him to raise him up, and restore his soul: For the Lord upholdeth all them that *fall* (Psalm cxlv. 14.) and teaches the soul to sing, on its approaching restoration, “Rejoice not against me O thou mine enemy. when I *fall*, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.”

Now let us enquire, by way of conclusion, How the Lord restores them? Not by *legal repentance* and *law terrors*; that is impossible: but by leading them, as I have before hinted, to that Jesus whom they have *again* crucified unto themselves! Their sins *had crucified* him *once*; which proves they are the redeemed interested, in his blood, which was never shed for formalists and hypocrites! To Christ, the bleeding Lamb, the Holy Spirit directs their penitential eyes; and his bleeding love restores them to salvation's joys! Thus the *divine bowels* were moved for Ephraim to his recovery! Thus David was restored by the publication of Divine pardon, “The Lord also hath put away thy iniquity, thou shall not die.” Thus, the infinitely affectionate, and compassionate look of Christ, dissolved Peter to floods of penitential tears: and thus every *fallen* saint is restored, not *by repentance* from dead works, but by an overcoming display of pardoning love!

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

Rejoice evermore. 1 THESS. v. 16.

What does Paul mean by the above exhortation; since joy and peace are new covenant blessings, and fruits which are solely of the Holy Spirit's production?