

# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

## EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXIV.] SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πανί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

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### QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, JUNE 21, 1824.

*If the corruptions of nature remain the same in a regenerated sinner, what are we to understand by the following scripture? "And they that are Christ's have CRUCIFIED the flesh with the affections and lusts?" Gal. v. 24.*

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### SOLUTION.

I have designedly selected this Question from many others which have been given me, for this evening's discussion, on account of its following so closely, and almost connectedly the subject of last Monday; viz. *The sanctification of the Holy Spirit*. So powerful is that indignation against sin, and so ardent those holy aspirations of soul after the presence of Christ, in the regenerated sinner, that the vivacity of his innate viciousness, and his carnal inclinations to comply with temptation, alarm, perplex, wound, grieve, and miserably deject the hidden man of his soul! Who, on this portion of scripture, reflectingly enquires: As my corruptions are so lively, so powerful, and sometimes, alas! so prevailing, as to carry my thoughts from Christ, to objects that are disgracefully unworthy of my attention, and that fill my mind with melancholy and woe, how can the *flesh*, with the *affections* and *lusts* be CRUCIFIED in me? And if not, I have no claim to interest in this scripture; and then what am I to conclude? Why, very fairly and unavoidably, I do

not belong to Christ: for "they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." This, so solemnly engages thought, as to absorb the whole mind with perplexing doubt, dark unbelief, and inconclusive agitation, and *silent* woe! "The daughter of Sion sitteth on the ground," in the sable garb of the bitterest dejection; or prostrate in the dust, weighed down with every discouragement, and seems to give up, for the painful moment, all hope of a real work of grace in the soul!

It is not a time for conversation with the people of God! for their spiritual vivacity, and precious experience of Divine Blessings seem, as they are related, but an aggravation of the distressing cause of the dejected soul! Which silently concludes: "Ah! these are, indeed, the people of God, who have *crucified* the flesh; surely, they have not feelings like mine—These are Christ's jewels, with whom I am unworthy to rank: they can speak to his glory, while my mouth is stopped with ignorance, shame, and hardness of heart! If they knew what passes within me, surely they would not so much as sit in my company!"

"I have not *crucified* the flesh, with the affections, and lusts! O wretched man that I am!" Let us then, poor dejected sinner! make a scriptural examination of this *crucifixion of the flesh*, which so concerns you: accompany me, for a little time (for melancholy as you are, I love your company) while I take a walk through some of the dark lanes, and miry roads, which are so well known to you, by painful experience; and then, under the divine direction, we may arrive most joyfully at the *high way*, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord: the WAY of HOLINESS, in which no *unclean thing* shall walk—in which none can possibly walk, but those who have so *crucified the flesh*!

And if in our spiritual perambulations, our gracious conductor, the Spirit of all consolation, is kindly pleased to lead us into the garden of our Lord, the odoriferous perfumes of his love shall so revive us, that we shall sit and sing in the ever-green bowers of his everlasting covenant, the rich bounties of our Lord, till we lose all our perplexing fears and doubts; for the *sacrifice* of IMMANUEL, and the abundance of his sin removing grace, send forth such heavenly odors, that unbelief and the world, sink and *limpish* into nothing, beneath the feet of triumphant faith!

I shall then, **FIRST**, enquire after the persons who have *cru-  
cified* the flesh.—“ They who are Christ’s.” And who are  
they ?

1. The people given to him by the Father. An especial  
people, graciously distinguished from all other people! an  
“especial people unto the Lord our God ” Which is prove-  
able by the holy triumph of Christ, at the certainty of see-  
ing the travail of his soul. “ All that the Father hath **GIV-  
EN** me, shall come to me.” (John vi. 37.) For whom he  
demands glory ; “ Father, I will that they also *whom thou  
hast GIVEN me*, be with me where I am, that they may be-  
hold my glory, which thou hast given me.” (John xvii. 21.)

2. They were the desire of his eyes, and the joy of his  
heart from eternity : and consequently became, “ the re-  
quest of his lips.” “ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the  
heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the  
earth for thy possession.” (Psalm ii. 8.) He requested,  
and as a most felicitous result to us, the glorious gospel  
reached our happy land, where the blessings of grace,  
have, and will be continued, while one elect vessel exists,  
in any part of the British islands.

3. They are Christ’s own choice, “ *Ye have not chosen  
me,*” saith the kind Redeemer to his disciples, “ but I have  
*chosen you.*” (John xv. 16.) Which shews his *equality*  
and *unity* with the Father, who also hath chosen his people  
in Christ, before the foundation of the world. (Eph. i. 4.)

4. His people by purchase, his sheep for whom he laid  
down his life—“ Feed the *church* of God, (not the world at  
large) which he has purchased with his own blood.” Acts  
xx. 28. “ I am the good shepherd (saith he whom my soul  
loveth) the good shepherd giveth his life for the **SHEEP**—  
and they shall never perish !” (John x. 11, 28.)

5. They possess his Spirit, for “ if any man have not  
the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. viii. 9.)  
The Blessed Comforter has given them faith, and hope,  
and love, and the spirit of liberty, life, and peace: and  
under his influence, they worship within the veil, and cry  
Abba Father !

6. They know the virtue of his blood, the power of his  
resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, by a rich  
experience of his *super-excellence*. (Phil. iii. 10.)

7. They are Christ’s. His property, his treasure, his

bride. And they are decidedly for Christ, and salvation alone, by their all-adorable Jesus. They are for Christ; and therefore unavoidably against all error, all vain and formal worship, and every thing, that would in the least, divest him of his mediatorial honors; or rob him of his eternal glory, as the complete Saviour of his church, and the mighty God!

8. They are, finally, all that can possibly be dear, precious, delightful invaluable, and inimitably beautiful in his sight. His portion, his care, his mystical body, his own flesh, his crown of triumph over his enemies, and will be his highest delight in heaven to all eternity! But here, we must leave off—for after all we can possibly say, though we are now the sons of God, it doth not yet appear what we shall be made at his august and glorious appearance!

We come now, in answer to the question, to inspect their conduct on earth, as it respects the great achievement expressed in the portion of scripture under consideration:—**THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE FLESH, WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS.**

On which, I am scripturally led to remark,

1. That it is the *spiritual man of the soul*, who crucifies the flesh. The flesh cannot be expected to crucify itself. Though it has, doubtless, led to the suicide of many a poor wretch: all the Arminian persuasions in the world, can never bring the flesh to be so out of love with itself, as either to oppose itself, or crucify itself. The flesh will never commit suicide, nor in any way destroy itself. It is the *holy work* of the *new man*—the *inner man*—the man of the heart—internal godliness—the *perfect man*—the perfect work of God in the soul—the *hidden man* of the heart—invisible to the world, and sometimes *hidden* in the hour of darkness, from the view of the believer himself; who can scarcely say, whether he is a believer in Christ or not—'tis the work of this *spiritual, new, inner, perfect, and hidden man*, to crucify the flesh! And this he does willingly, gladly, and very easily, through Christ Jesus, who strengthens him!

The work of grace in the heart, or the new man, is clearly discerned by his deep and unassuming humility. By his looking unto Jesus for the subduction of sin, he hates sin with a perfect hatred; yet makes no pretension what-

ever, to conquer, or even to repel it, in his own strength. But looking unto Jesus, in whom he views all fulness of grace, he is bold and courageous as a lion against the flesh, with the affections and lusts: because he fights not in his own strength, but advances, "in the name of the Lord God of Israel!" Before whom, every enemy must finally fall! His eyes of faith are fixed on Jesus; on his body on the tree; on his wounds, his sufferings, and his streaming blood; till lost in wonder at the Saviour's love, he feels his iniquities pardoned, and his corruptions subdued.— "Looking unto Jesus," is the Christian's best position, and faith's most delightful employ! The conquest, then, over indwelling sin is at the foot of the cross; alone, at the foot of the bleeding cross of Christ: and before I advance any farther in this subject, suffer me to assure you, for the honor and glory of our INCARNATE GOD, that whatever pretences may be made by workmongers, to subdue sin by their legal assiduity and the boasted prowess of their own arm, sin is never to be brought under, but by faith in his most precious blood! I know it, and so do you, who are Christ's by a gracious calling. When we were *Arminians*, making efforts against sin in our own strength, we stumbled and fell. True, we might carry our cup upright in the eyes of men; and very consistently keep up an outward reformation in morals: we might regularly attend at our churches and chapels, and religiously pursue our way, in a high and zealous profession of Christianity: but alas! all this fell short of crucifying *inward sin*. The Lord who had begun the good work *in us*, gradually opened to our view, that the leprosy laid deep within: that the heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!— Then we began to cry out again for mercy, for pardon, for sin-subduing grace, and were directed of the blessed Jesus, to the grand source whence they flow—*Look unto ME!* he most affectionately said, "*I am the way.*" Turn your eyes from self! *Behold ME!* *Behold ME!* Behold my hands and my feet, and look into my side! Our *filthy garments* were taken away; those detestable rags of our *once* pretended fleshly sanctity, and that which we thought *gain* we now esteemed dross and dung—that *once* supposedly excellent righteousness of our own, so duteously wrought out by ourselves, which we thought would gain us even

heaven itself—we counted *loss*—an hindrance to our coming to Christ—for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord : we then became *sinner*s, willing to be saved by GRACE ; and ever since, God has graciously kept us sinners, more than ever dependent on GRACE, in our own estimation ; yet rejoicing in Christ, and magnifying his name, whose GRACE is sufficient for us ! Grace, free grace is all our dependence ; grace, free, electing, distinguishing grace in the bleeding Savior, keeps us from despair ; makes us willingly and affectionately obey our God ; renders sin daily more hateful, and strengthens our confidence in the absolute and unconditional promises of our God ! We have not a twig to hang upon for support, nor an atom of hope out of the abounding grace of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace, free grace, is our boast, our glory, and our trust now, and will form our rapturous theme, when we join the everlasting song above ! In the strength of this actuating grace, we crucify the flesh ; the corruptions of our exceedingly sinful nature. And let it be particularly observed, in answer to the question, that this CRUCIFIXION *does not imply,*

1. An *eradication* of sin : “ *If we (saith John) say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” (John i. 8.) WE, who are believers in Christ ! Job penitently confesses, “ *Behold I am vile !*” (Job xl. 4.) and “ *abhors himself*” (Job xlii. 6.) Isaiah says, “ *I am a man of unclean lips.*” (Isaiah vi. 5.) Paul groans under a body of sin and death, exclaiming, “ *O wretched man that I am.*” (Rom. vii. 24.) Yet these were *holy* men of God, taught to know their nature’s malady, that they might seek the remedy provided for them—taught to know their sinfulness, that they might have no confidence in the flesh, but fly for refuge to Jesus, the glorious hope set before them. The flesh then, is not *eradicated* by the believer, but *crucified*. Let us keep to the word CRUCIFIED, as used by the apostle, and it will considerably assist us in the elucidation of the passage.

2. Neither does it imply, that we by our own activity, can liberate and save ourselves from its dominion ; that we can subdue it by an adherence to the law of ten commands ; for the apostle renders a directly opposite reason, why we are not under its domination ; he attributes our liberation from

its tyrannic sway, entirely to another, and infinitely more glorious cause. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," saith he; Why? Because you are under the law? No: but because you are NOT UNDER THE LAW, but UNDER GRACE!

Strongly expressing this undeniable fact—that as many as are under it—or who are of the works of the law—are not only under the curse; but after all their zeal for legal works, are slaves to sin: and that none but those who are under grace, in contradistinction to the law, are freed from sin's dominion. Who are, by that admirable miracle, *regeneration*, brought under the gracious government of CHRIST, to serve HIM in newness of Spirit—who are so under *grace*, as to love it, delight in it, and to contend for its freeness, sovereignty and discrimination—Who will not "turn the grace of God into *licentiousness*," or, in other words, say that it leads to *licentiousness*; but will bear testimony, that grace alone gives the sinner an hearty detestation to the flesh, and that *grace alone*, produces an affectionate obedience to the Lord; of which the mere professor knows nothing. The CRUCIFIXION then enquired after by the Querist, is,

1. To carry the *flesh* with all the affections and lusts, to the cross of Christ: for there can be no crucifixion without a *cross*; and what cross has the efficacy to remove, to cancel and take away sin from the sinner, except the cross of our crucified Redeemer? In which alone, Paul gloried with a complete renunciation of the *flesh*. "They desire to have you circumcised;" saith he, that they may glory in your *flesh*, (i. e. your *fleshly obedience*) but God forbid that I should glory, save in the *cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Gal. vi. 13, 14.)

Sinner, you are invited to go just as you are, and roll your burden upon the Lord—with all your sins and all your sorrows, look to the bleeding cross of Jesus, who thus invites; "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—Not, come unto me well prepared, with your meritorious goodness—but come in the character of those, that I came purposely to save—come as a wretched sinner—"For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2. The sinner who thus looks to the blood of his cross,

loses all his sins, and obtains in his *blood-purified* conscience, the peace of God: for our Immanuel has “made peace by the blood of his cross.” (Col. i. 20.) And all other peace of conscience, from whatever source it flows, is *deceptive* peace, and in which, thousands of professors rest, through their false teachers, who (at the request of their hearers too) prophesy smooth things in the name of the Lord, and cry, *peace, peace*, where there is no peace!

3. Faith in a precious Christ, views the flesh, and all its vile affections and lusts, in his gaping wounds on Calvary: and the sinner, thus exercising faith, rejoices that his scarlet and crimson sins, are become white as snow, and as wool. (Isaiah i. 18.) And that he stands everlastingly acquitted from the charge of sin, by divine justice; as his sins were imputed to Jesus, who made so complete an atonement for them, as to put them away for ever. Faith thus looks to, and lives wholly on Christ; and this is the rejoicing of the believer: “I am *crucified with Christ*: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh; I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me!” (Gal. ii. 20.)

4. It is only when the sinner is steadfastly looking unto Jesus, and to Jesus alone, that the lusts and affections of the flesh are subdued: he sees them in Christ’s sufferings and abhors them: he beholds them atoned for by Jesus, and put away for ever: and O what praise and thankfulness overcome his soul! All his powers of mind are carried away captive to Jesus: his thoughts, wishes, desires, and affections, centre so delightfully in *Christ crucified* for him, that he has no time, nor thought for the exercise of any other, at this happy season of triumphant *faith*; for by thus looking unto Jesus, he “has crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” His affections are set on things above. His treasure is in heaven, and his heart is there also: and as the heart governs the life, his conduct will be universally devoted to God; to his cause, and the glory of his name.



# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

## AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXV.] SATURDAY, JULY 3, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πανὶ Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

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### QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, JUNE 28, 1824.

*“Who were those which uttered their voices, and said, Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come? And what are we to understand by his wife making herself ready?”* REV. XIX. 7.

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### SOLUTION.

THESE delightful words are selected from the celestial anthem, to be sung by those who are redeemed from among men, at the total destruction of Antichrist, that Great Whore, clothed in scarlet, who hath corrupted the earth with her fornications; the grand and immortal chorus of which, unitedly sung, by ten thousand times ten thousand tongues, shall sound “as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

The battle will be great, and everlastingly decisive, the awful destruction of the church's enemies universal, and the joy at the great event, will be proportionate with the beauties, blessings, and glories, that shall for ever rest upon the redeemed. “Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God.” Such will be the general and unbounded triumph of the saints, such, the unparalleled harmony, sweetness, and power of their un-

sic, and such the universal plaudits of immortal honors, that shall burst from millions of tongues, and ascend before the Omnipotent throne of the Great Conqueror, who is the King of Kings, and Lord of lords!

“*Let us be glad,*” is the exhortation, or rather rapturous request, mutually and zealously put to each other, among the blood-bought tribes of God: they are all of one heart and soul, calling for an universal shout over the enemy slain! Thus shall the acclamations of joy, sound from pole to pole, when Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of Harlots shall fall—thus shall the honors of our Jesus, resound to the ends of the earth, on that very desirable and grand event, glorious to the whole world: When priestly usurpation, and every species of cruel persecution, false doctrine, and lamentable superstition, shall fall, to rise no more.

And, “*Let us be glad and rejoice*” is a suitable reciprocity of address, among us, this evening, for though Antichrist yet reigns, and error and superstition abounds, the precious promises of our God teem with joy, as they point to the glorious time of the church’s deliverance, a time that must arrive—secured to the ransomed, by the veracity, faithfulness, and oath of Jehovah.

Besides, we, as individuals, are loudly called upon to be glad, and rejoice on account of our present privileges, and the blessings of grace that now rest upon us in wonderful abundance. May such joy be graciously made ours, this evening, that instead of murmuring, complaining, and silently indulging unbelief, to which we are so shamefully prone, we may start from our stupor, and say, individually say, with all due gratitude to our God, “Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all within me, bless his holy name;” and that we may, moreover, unite in the mutual address, “Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” —(verse 5.)

1. I am first asked, *Who the persons were, that uttered their voices, &c.* In answer,

1. They were neither the world, that by nature, is dead in sin, nor proud professors of self-righteousness, for they gave all honor and glory to the Lamb! Nor were they *angels*, though the angelic host, no doubt, aided their music.

But the subject of their song, the object of their address, and the epithets applied to them, will shew us at once, who

they were, It was a great voice of *much* people, (verse 1) who were “ called unto the supper of the *Lamb* ;” (verse 9) and were arrayed in “ the fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints :” (verse 8.) and consequently, were the saints themselves, whom John saw in vision, and whose extacies of praise, he heard at the glorious fall of Babylon.

The poverty-struck sinner alone, who is poor and miserable in his very soul, will sing *Alleluia*, salvation and glory, to a precious Christ! He knows his worth, and ascribes the whole of his salvation to his free grace and bleeding love!

2. Those who so exult in Jesus, are taught their harmonious music by the Holy Spirit: he puts a new song into their mouth, even *glory unto the Lord our God!* The music of Prodigals, who are brought home to their heavenly Father’s house.

3. *To the supper of the Lamb.* The precious *Lamb* slain for us, who “ hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*” (verse 16.)

4. The supper to which they are brought, is a feast of heavenly delicacies: “ Fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined.” (Isaiah xx. v6.) They feast on the covenant love and precious promises of God, they eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood—they live on the atonement and righteousness of the Lamb, by precious faith, and when that faith is in exercise, can sing with WATTS,

“ His dearest flesh, he makes my food,  
And bids me drink his richest blood.”

5. It is the *marriage* supper of the Lamb. Which marriage implies a *bond*: the bond of everlasting love: he has thereby bound himself never to leave, nor forsake her: never to depart from her to do her good, but to put his fear in her heart, and never to suffer her to depart from him.— (Jer. xxxii. 40.) Second, it implies a union: “ I in them,” saith he, in his holy address to the Father, “ and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me ” (John xvii. 23.) There is a vital union, they have eternal life in him, and spiritual life from him, communicated by the Holy Spirit, and he hath declared to his beloved bride; “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” They live together, and hold the sweetest communion with each other.

6. Great, unfading, and never-ending as is the love of

the bridegroom, the bride, is naturally, a person, the most ugly, deformed, and disagreeable upon the earth! Shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin, altogether as an unclean thing; and what is still more disgusting, with an heart overflowing with indignation against him. She is also deeply involved in debt, without any prospect of ever paying one mite! Yet to the astonishment of all who are acquainted with the great transaction, he still rests in his love, and is determined to take all consequences upon himself! But blessings for ever on the Lamb! He is infinite in wisdom, and boundless in might: and hath devised a wonderful way to cleanse, and render her more pure, and more beautiful, than she was ever deformed and polluted! He has skilfully and omnipotently executed his admirable plan—and in the immense riches of his grace, paid all her debts, to the very last farthing, to the perfect and everlasting satisfaction of all her creditors! He sends forth the heavenly dove, with the peaceful olive, and with the sweetest testimonials of his great love, by which her enmity to him is slain, and all the powers of her soul won over with the warmest affection! “Wonders of grace to God belong.” We love him; but it is because he first loved us, and shed abroad his love in our hearts! Give him then all the glory, by ascribing unto him all the power in our salvation!

7. He is bound to take care of his bride, and to defend her against all her enemies: hence the sweet exhortations “Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed—casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.”

But the marriage supper of the lamb with the universal joy and delight of the church, as set forth in this 19th chapter of Revelations, is a beautiful description of the glory that awaits the bride of Christ after the downfall of Antichrist.

In the 17th chapter, we have an account of the rise and progress of the great beast, with seven heads and ten horns.

“And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom, as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” (Rev. xvii. 12, 13.) The royal support that the Pope hath received for centuries, and the tyrannic power

that he hath usurped over the kings of the earth, sufficiently illustrate this Scripture: more especially, when we take into the account, his horrid, bloody, and brutal persecutions. It is added (in verse 14.) these shall make war with the Lamb, that is, shall violently persecute his people, led on by the greatest enmity to the Lamb, and his gospel, in its beautiful simplicity. And yet, how wonderful! well may he be called Antichrist, (that is one that feigns himself to be Christ) for all the persecutions of the Christians, have been hypocritically carried on, under the pretence of zeal for Christ and his church! Let Protestant professors beware of this spirit of Antichrist, which is not confined to Rome. Let them beware, least, amidst their warm zeal for salvation, *partly by works*, and *partly by grace*: amidst all the pageantry and pomp of their ceremonious profession, they be found at *war* with the Lamb!

For, to repel the doctrines of salvation, all of grace, to vilify those doctrines, by most wickedly saying, that they lead to licentiousness, and to represent the ministers of the gospel as *Antinomians* in the vilest sense of the word, fall but little short, if any thing at all, of declaring war against the Lamb of God!

Such has been the prevalency of Antichristian doctrines, and such the monstrous strides of *papistical* power, that the nations of the earth have been drunk with the abominations, and have sunk willingly and slavishly, under the tyranny of *priestcraft*; believing “the signs, and *lying wonders*” of the man of sin! in complete fulfilment of Rev. xvii. 8. “And they that dwell on the earth, shall wonder whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world, when they behold the *beast*, that was, and is not, and yet is.” But blessed Lamb of God! Thou shalt overcome them, for thou art Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with thee, are chosen and called and faithful. (Rev. xvii. 14.) That great city, Babylon, shall be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. “Her plagues shall come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her;” and whose wrath shines with all the brilliancy of glorious justice in her destruction, “For in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon earth.” *Read the 18th chapter of Revelations, and also, Fox’s Book of Martyrs.*

God will most graciously visit the nations with emancipation from Popery: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire, for God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will." (Rev. xvii. 16, 17.) Then "kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens shall be nursing mothers in the Israel of God." When it will be accomplished, I do not pretend to say, but that it will be most accurately accomplished, I most unhesitatingly and joyfully assure you;—for, "*These are the true sayings of God.*" (Rev. xvii. 9.)

On the accomplishment of which, the TRIUMPHANT ANTHEM of the 17th chapter, shall be sung by the TRUE, SPIRITUAL, and HUMBLE church of Christ, which is supported, not by the might and power of man, but "*By my Spirit,*" saith the Lord of Hosts, nor defended by fire, and faggot, inquisitions, tortures, racks, confiscation of goods, fines, imprisonments, and chains like that of Antichrist; for it is the church of the *meek and lowly* Jesus, who hath said, "*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.*" John xviii. 36.

Neither is it arrayed in human pomp and splendour, nor endowed, in general, with the money, or riches of this world. The real members of Christ's true church, are not only *internally* but also *externally* assimilated to the likeness of their Lord, "who had not where to lay his head!" Paul has been graciously influenced thus to address the church on the subject, "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, &c."

This truly humble church of Jesus, worship him in Spirit and in truth. Its members love one another, and do not forsake the assembling themselves together: they love to meet for public worship, and it is a matter of little consequence where, if the gospel is but faithfully and experimentally preached—beautifully decorated, and play-house-like buildings, the finely-toned organs, the costly paintings, the elegantly lined pews, and the velvet cushions, they leave as attractions for those who prefer gaiety and gain to godliness—as it respects the place of meeting, neatness, simplicity, room, and convenience, are the very summit of their wishes; far nobler objects attract them, and prove

irresistible incentives, for convening in the name of the Lord. The truth in its purity, the worship of God in its simplicity, and the unity of the Spirit reciprocally enjoyed, and above all, communion with a covenant God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! This is the description of people, who say, “*Let us be glad and rejoice in him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready;*”—which leads me to the second part of the enquiry.

II. *What are we to understand by his wife making herself ready?* To which I reply,

1. Not by works and preparations, by self-purifications, and the performances of numerous duties, by which she initiates herself into the favor of her husband, and obtains the affections of his heart!—if so, she might boast of her performances which would be contrary to faith, that excludes boasting, and violently hostile to the whole glorious gospel of grace, which plainly and positively declares, “*Not of works, lest any man should boast: for by grace we are saved—not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy, he has saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*” (Eph. ii. 8, 9. Tit. iii. 5. 2 Tim. i. 9.)

2. *Her readiness* for the reception of Christ, consists, in a complete renunciation of the filthy rags of her own righteousness, and a putting on, by precious faith, the wedding garment, which the Lamb made so exquisitely beautiful by the spotless perfection of his meritorious obedience, and dyed it in his own heart's blood! Without which, Christ could not receive her into the marriage chamber. Should **she** appear in her *own* clothing, the confounding question would be put, “*Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?*” and she would be *speechless*. (Matt. xxii. 12.)

3. Making herself ready, is the wonderful and powerful work of faith, by which the *new man embraces* the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith, that active principle of soul, enters the wardrobe of divine grace, and finds the wedding garment already prepared by the lord of the feast; which she embraces, because it was wrought out for sinners, and *only for sinners*. The subject of this faith of the operation of

God, gazes with love and wonder on the bleeding sacrifice, **and the** atonement **and** righteousness of Jesus becomes precious and delightful; because so necessary **and** so suitable to **his** case—He doubts no longer, why? He cannot, for **he** is led to see what **has** so long kept him from Christ; his self-righteousness, his examination of himself, for something or other to recommend him, **and** when **he** found it not, concluded that he was too bad, too vile, too unholy for Christ—whereas **he** now sees clearly, that were **his** sins multiplied by a million, the blood of Jesus would wash him white as snow! His delightful **and** joyful song, is now

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling,  
Naked come to thee for dress,  
Helpless look to thee for grace.  
Foul, I to the fountain fly,  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.”

4. She hears the command of her Lord, **and** by precious faith she immediately obeys him. He thus addresses her: “Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion: put on thy *beautiful garments*, O Jerusalem! the holy city; for henceforth, there shall no more come into thee, the uncircumcised **and the** unclean.” (Isaiah lii. 1.) “As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isaiah lxii. 5.) “Harken, O daughter, and consider **and** incline thine ear, forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty! for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.” (Psalm xlv. 10, 11.) To whom she gladly, humbly, and thankfully replies: “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? Yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will joy in the God of my salvation. I will greatly rejoice in **the** Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation; he hath covered me with **the** robe of righteousness: whom have I in heaven but thee, **and** upon the earth, there is none that I desire besides thee.”

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING,  
*Why did Christ say unto MARY, “Touch me not.” When he commanded THOMAS, to do directly the contrary?—*  
JOHN XX. 17, 27.



# BIBLICAL CRITICISMS

AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF  
EXPERIMENTAL GODLINESS.

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No. XXVI.] SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1824.

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Τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν παντί Χριστός.—PAUL.

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

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## QUESTION.

LIMEHOUSE, MONDAY, JULY 5, 1824.

*Why did Christ say unto MARY, "Touch me not." When he commanded THOMAS, to do directly the contrary?—*  
JOHN XX. 17, 27.

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## SOLUTION.

ONE of the most noble, and encouraging subjects to a truly sensible sinner, who is made willing to be saved by Jesus, *alone* by Jesus, to his eternal glory, is and ever will be, the *atonement*, complete, irrefrustrable, certain, and eternally efficacious in the salvation of God's elect; or, in other words, those for whom Christ, especially and particularly died—those who were known to him as the gift of his Father, whose sins were charged upon him on Calvary, and for whom he has gloriously conquered earth and hell, and given ample and everlasting satisfaction to *divine justice*!—Through his death, justice smiles upon us in the sweetest union with mercy! *legally* approving our acquittal from the sentence of the law! and rejoicing over us, as we stand without *spot* or *wrinkle* in the spotless holiness of Immanuel our Redeemer! His *death*, his *efficacious death*, is our joy, our boast, our song: and God forbid, that we should glory, save in the cross of Christ—yet if any thing can exceed the subject of his death, in consoling, and giv-

ing us joy unspeakable, his resurrection and ascension to his own glory, must have that superior effect on our exulting minds: for his resurrection establishes the truth of his finished and accurately completed work, and his ascension the *approval* of his work by our covenant God and Father! Having nailed our sins to his cross, and spoiled principalities and powers—he enters the tomb—but he enters only to divest it of its power—as the great antitype of Sampson he resumes his surprising strength, and carries away the *bars* of the grave!—shall the grave then triumph for ever over the ashes of the saints? No: for now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruit of them that slept: and is ascended to his own glory, our representative and forerunner in the skies! I am led to make these observations from a view of the question, which exhibits in the most beautiful aspect, the *resurrection* and *ascension* of Christ Jesus our Lord! That there is a seeming contradiction to his command given to MARY, in that which he soon after gave to THOMAS, must be allowed: but that it is but a seeming contradiction, will be as readily acknowledged, by those who know, and are assured that with our Jesus, the fountain of all perfection, there can be no inconsistency, nor the shadow of turning! We will take under our consideration and examination;

I. MARY, her circumstances, and the command or charge given her: “*Touch me not.*” It will be profitable to attend for a few minutes, prior to the elucidation of the question, to the scriptural acceptations of the word TOUCH.

1. To *injure*. Hence the kind and tender proclamation of Jehovah, in behalf of his people and his prophets: “He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes: saying, TOUCH not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” (Psalm cv. 14, 15.)—And the sweetly consoling declaration of his love, tenderest care, and watchfulness over us; “He that *toucheth* you *toucheth* the apple of his eye.” (Zech. ii. 8.) So that whatever our enemies may attempt, they cannot in reality, injure us: much as we may seemingly suffer through their malice, the end shall be our good, our advantage, God’s glory, and their confusion: and in all our afflictions, tho’ we, pained to the heart, cry, “all these things are against

me," the end will be "the peaceable fruits of righteousness:" our instruction, our humiliation, our growth in the knowledge of grace and Christ, are thereby promoted:—and interpositions of upholding, sustaining, and delivering grace, will redound to the Divine Glory, for ever and ever! "He shall deliver you in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil TOUCH thee." (Job. v. 19.)

2. An unlawful approach to, or intimacy with any forbidden object: a uniting with those who are engaged in false, vain, or idolatrous worship. "TOUCH no unclean thing," is the divine mandate; (Isaiah lii. 11.) which Paul explains by a very serious exhortation, but which, alas! is too much disregarded, even by the people of God!—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, TOUCH not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, &c." Come out from among erroneous and unregenerated professors, who have no more religion, than that which springs from the flesh—which leads them to despise and persecute the riches of God's grace, and those who live a life of faith, entirely on Christ—"be ye separate," this is the divine command of our God, and that Christian who neglects it, is guilty of high rebellion against him!

3. We will look at the word now, in a *good* and excellent sense. So virtuously and powerfully efficacious was the TOUCH of Christ, that "they brought young children to him, that he might TOUCH them."—(Mark x. 13.) Not that he might sprinkle them, but touch them; in order, no doubt, that they might be cured of some bodily disease or infirmity. And not less efficacious is his touch now—O when he reaches forth the arm of his omnipotent power, and with the hand of his love, *touches* the heart and conscience of a poor *sick* and infirm sinner!—what effectual cleansing and healing is there! The pale, decrepid, and death-struck wretch, puts on the delightful bloom of health and in all the vivacity, agility, and vigor of youth, leaps like an hart, and runs in the ways of the Lord, without *weariness*; for they are delightful; and walks by precious faith in Christ, without fainting: for his strength is perpetually renewed, with the reviving and invigorating cordials of the loving-kindness of his best beloved.

4. We will, *lastly*, notice the precious touch of *faith*.—There is a reciprocal touch between the *saved* sinner and

his bleeding Lord. When Jesus *touches* the ear, the eye, the heart, with the finger of his grace, the sinner hears the joyful sound, sees the king in his beauty, tastes the greatness of his grace, smells the rich perfumes of his garments, and feels the invincible power of his great salvation! which leads him to touch the hem of his garment, the robe of his righteousness, by emboldening confidence, or unhesitating faith. This is beautifully exemplified in the woman, who was healed after twelve years of disease, only by touching the hem of his garment! “*And behold a woman*”—well may the narrative commence with a *behold!* It was truly admirable—“*which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said, within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.*” (Mat. ix. 20.)

Faith is indeed the substance of things hoped for; she had the cure in her faith, the thing she hoped for, prior to its being performed; so the tried and afflicted saint, has his deliverances out of trouble, his perseverance, and glorification, the precious things he hopeth for, in his possession by faith, before they arrive; for his faith standeth not in the wisdom of man—that preaches to him *impossibilities*; but in the manifold power of God, with whom all things are possible, who having promised, is *able* to perform, and whose faithfulness and immutability forbid all doubt and hesitation, concerning the accomplishment of those promises, which are *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus our Lord. Faith says “Although my house is not so with God—tho’ things are not with me as I could wish—and prospects are dark and gloomy to human sight, I hope for things that are not seen; and that are sure to come; for he hath made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure, which covenant is confirmed by his oath, sealed with the blood of his dear Son, and witnessed in my soul by the Holy Spirit: who hath led me into the bond of the covenant; into the sweet enjoyment of those *two immutable things, by which it is impossible for God to lie*: and with strong consolation, I cannot but lay hold of the hope set before me: which hope I have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; rejoicing, that ‘there are Three that bear re-

cord in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One,' in whose eternal council, determinations, and settlements of love, I do most confidently and happily rest, for he has declared, concerning his people, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish!" I believe it and rejoice in full assurance that my life is hidden with Christ in God, and when he, who is my life shall appear, I shall appear with him, in glory, and see him as he is!

But the forbidden touch of MARY, was that of an embrace, which she was about to do, overcome with gladness, love, and surprise! After her conversation with the angels, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and *knew not* that it was Jesus. He first addresses her by the name, expressive of her sex, "*Woman*, why weepest thou?" she then, (still ignorant of the person she addressed, for she supposed him to be the *gardener*) saith unto him, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." But, O when he called her by her own name, what love and wonder overpowered all the faculties of her soul! "Jesus saith unto her, MARY!"—Ignorance of his person, flew before the charming sound, like darkness before the orient beams of the rising sun—she exclaims, "*Rabboni!*" which is to say, Master, and instantaneously flew, with a heart, expanded with love and delight, to embrace him—but was prevented by his immediate prohibition, "*Touch me not.*"

I am asked, Why, he forbids it? To which I answer.

1. He must ascend from the tomb to his Father, without a human touch; for his great work is accomplished, his body shall no more dwell upon the earth, as the man of sorrows. He is her *risen, ascending, and glorified* Lord!—This reason he himself renders. "I am not yet ascended unto my Father"—as if he had said, wait that event, and then adore me.

2. She must no more embrace him on the earth, with the familiarity she was wont to do, in his state of *humiliation*, but worship him in future, as God and the Lamb, in his eternal *exaltation*.

3. His resurrection; of which she was the first human

witness, proved that he had accomplished his great undertaking, in the conquest and destruction of the power of devils, men, death, and the grave! And that our mighty sins were carried by him into the land of forgetfulness, to be found no more, nor to be remembered at all by *satisfied* justice! Death struggles with the illustrious hero—but death falls undermost in the great struggle, and our Jesus ascends, leaving the sepulchre with the immortal honors of accomplishing his heroic resolution, made in covenant in behalf of his people: “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues! O grave I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hidden from my eyes.” (Hos. xiii. 14.)

The battle is fought, the victory is won:—death’s sting is extracted; the grave must resign the bodies of the saints at the morning of the resurrection, that *soul* and *body both redeemed*, may be for ever with the Lord!

4. But while we remark that his resurrection proves the completion of his great work, we cannot avoid carrying our exultation yet farther; by noticing that his *ascension* proves that great work to have been truly acceptable to his Father. Hence he says to Mary, “Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” Glorified for ever, there he waits the joyful arrival of his ransomed brethren:—expecting that all his enemies shall be made his footstool—expecting to see his seed: to see of the travail of his soul, with eternal satisfaction.

5. He ascends, that the Comforter may come down, and teach sinners the virtue of his blood, the prowess of his Almighty arm, the love of his heart, and his triumphs of victory over death and the grave. “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, saith he, to his disciples, the Comforter cannot come unto you.”

6. She must then expect no more familiar intercourse with him upon the earth, as before his death, but view him, after enduring all his mediatorial sufferings, arrayed in his mediatorial glories in the Third Heavens; from whence we look for the mighty Saviour, our exalted Christ, the Lord our God!

We are now arrived to that closing part of the Question,

which naturally leads us to take particular notice of *Thomas*, whom we may indeed denominate, notwithstanding he was a disciple of Christ, *unbelieving Thomas*.

Concerning whom, as contrasted with *Mary*, let it be particularly observed.

1. That when Jesus manifested himself to *Thomas*, he had ascended to his Father, for it was eight days after his declaration to *Mary*: “*I am not yet ascended:*” And as a proof that he had ascended, when he addressed *Thomas*, we have his commission given to *Mary*; “*Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, &c.*” He does not say, *I shall*, after I have had an interview with them, referring to his triumphant ascension, but *I now ascend*, as the great conqueror of death and the grave.

2. *Thomas* was not like *Mary*, about to embrace him; neither was he commanded to do so; but to thrust his hand into the side of his risen Lord, as an *evidence that it was the same body* that expired on the cross!

3. *Thomas* was suffered to sink into that wretched state of unbelief, and to require such a circumstantial examination of the human body of Jesus, that it might be left upon sacred record, as indubitable evidence of the *resurrection* of our Lord, for the faith of believers, in all succeeding generations, to the end of time: hence the conclusion of Christ; “*Blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed!*”

4. He taught her the doctrine of his *ascension*, and him, the doctrine of his *resurrection*; and from the whole of the delightful chapter, blessed be the precious Christ, our faith in him is so confirmed, that we rejoice in full assurance, that we too shall *arise*, and ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord!

5. We bless the Lord, for this infallible testimony of the resurrection and ascension of the divinely-enthroned Jesus: yet we rejoice, moreover, that *Mary*, *Thomas*, and the disciples, were not the only witnesses of the undeniable fact, for many hundreds besides, corroborated their evidence by ocular demonstration, even as late as the time that Paul wrote his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*! Hear the apostle’s own testimony, “*I have delivered unto you, first*

of all, that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of *above five hundred brethren at once*, of whom, the greater part remain, unto this present; but some are fallen asleep." (1 Cor. xv. 3—6.)

Here we have a *redundancy* of evidence, (if I may be allowed the word) in defence of the truth; and *evidence* never attempted to be refuted! Let the disputer of this world, take it into serious consideration! and let him invalidate this apostolic testimony if he can, by genuine history—we defy him: Paul did not write this account, to an illiterate and uninformed people, but to the enlightened Corinthians; whom he refers to, then, living witnesses, and that to the number of the *greater part of five hundred brethren!*

6. And farther to substantiate the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Son of God, he adds, "*And at last of all, he was seen of me also.*" Paul beheld him after his ascension, in his glorified state in the heavens:—Stephen also beheld him at the right hand of God, and cried, "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit!" We may therefore conclude in the words of the apostle's exultation "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men, the most miserable: but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." All honor and glory to our risen and exalted Savior, with whom we shall reign for ever and ever!

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#### QUESTION FOR NEXT MONDAY EVENING,

*What are we to understand spiritually, by the living creatures and the wheels, in the first chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel?*