

16. The contentions between Eleazar, Simon and John, were frantic, destructive, and protracted. In their intestine wars they slaughtered one another, and burnt their provision, by which seditious infatuation, they destroyed, as Josephus judiciously termed it, the nerves of their power. “Except the Lord build the city and keep it, the labourers labour, and the watchmen watch in vain.”

His concern for them. He was a minister of the circumcision, and sent to the seed of Abraham, whose posterity, he in his love and pity redeemed from Egyptian bondage, and bare and carried them all the days of old. *They were Israelites to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers; and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for evermore.* Amen. Rom. ix. 4, 5. Their worship, temple, and city, were peculiar, interesting, and magnificent. “*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth was mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*” Ps. lxxxiv. 2. It was when the attention of Christ was drawn to the city, by expressions of admirations from his disciples, that he observed there was not one stone laid upon another that should not be thrown down. And the Romans not only conquered the Jews and demolished their buildings, but actually ripped them open, and ploughed up the very foundation of their buildings in quest of treasure. It was when approaching to this almost celestial spot, and beholding the city that he wept over it, saying, “*If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*” Luke xix. 41—4.

This was the consequence of their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of life and glory. It is with sincere pleasure the following extract is copied from the New Evangelical Magazine, for May 1827. Matt. xxiii. 27. 'The metaphor here used is a very beautiful one. When the hen sees a bird of prey coming, she makes a noise to assemble her chickens, that she may cover them with her wings from the danger. The Roman eagle was about to fall on the Jewish state. Our Lord expresses a desire to guard them from threatened calamities. They disregarded his invitations and warnings, and fell a prey to their adversaries.'

If this scriptural illustration can be admitted, it will be a clear case that there can be nothing in favour of offered and rejected grace. For it will not be asserted that the calamities of the Jews befel them for their criminal neglect in getting the principle of electing grace, but for their rejecting the evidence of his Messiahship, persecuting and ultimately crucifying him. And if so, it will follow that a belief in him as the Messiah, an attendance on his ministry, and belief in his miracles, &c. would have prevented their overthrow and dispersion. It will therefore be clearly seen, that no offer of grace was necessary, and that no rejection thereof is implied.

The plain truth is this, Jesus Christ plainly foresaw the destruction of the Jewish nation, would have gathered them by his ministry, protected them from their calamities, and did actually commiserate with them in the prospect of their future sufferings. For, as he spoke as never man spoke, so he *felt* as never man *felt*. Unquestionably the attributes of his soul were fitly proportioned to each other; but to conclude that because his feelings were exquisitely sensible, he must offer them everlasting blessings, seem to me a very doubtful inference.

If I mistake not, the following things will shew such a conclusion to be entirely fallacious.

The WILL which our Lord had to shelter and protect the Jews, was an attribute of his human nature, and

not of his divine. It will be readily allowed, that our great Redeemer had two wills, as well as two natures; and that as there was an essential difference between the two natures, so likewise between their attributes and relations. The attributes of the one were very *different* to those of the other, though not *contrary*; those of the human nature being always in subserviency to those of the divine. Instances of his human affection and will, may be seen in Mark x. 21. Luke xix. 41. xxii. 42. The divine will knows no control. His counsels *shall* stand, and he *will* do all his *pleasure*. His government is grounded on *potent wills and shalls*, displays the independency of his throne, opens his sovereign designs, and will cover both himself and his church with unrivalled glory.

2. *Had Immanuel willed their salvation as God, he would certainly have accomplished it as God-man.* He came to do the *will* of his Father; and had it have been the absolute will of his Father to have saved Jerusalem by his Son, either in a temporal or spiritual point of view, no doubt but his will would have been executed by his Son. If he had purchased them by his blood, no doubt they would have been brought under his sheltering atonement. Seeing it is said, “this is the Father’s *will* which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” John vi. 39. And we are assured that all the chosen seed *shall* come unto him, and shall not be cast out. ver. 37.

3. *This WILL to gather the Jews was not continuous and eternal; as the adverb OFTEN clearly demonstrates.* God’s will is eternal, invariable, and unalterable. The language therefore can by no means agree with the *will* of Jehovah. But the attributes of the human nature of Christ not being eternal, and his will while on earth being often guided by local and relative considerations, there appears no difficulty in applying the language to denote his human will in distinction from the divine. And this could only regard temporal things.

4. *They resisted his WILL and his EFFORTS.* Now we are sure that his calls and efforts as *God*, can never

be resisted. The energy of divine grace is irresistible. *Who hath resisted his will?* "I will work and none shall let it," or turn it back, (Heb.) Isa. xliii. 13. "If he had purposed none could disannul it, and if he had stretched out his arm to have gathered them, none could have turned it back. Isaiah xiv. 27. The desire therefore of our Lord to save them, must be confined to his human nature, his efforts to his ministry, and their safety to his providence.

5. *Jesus Christ did not direct his observations in a general manner, but confined them chiefly to the ecclesiastic rulers of the people, as may be clearly seen by consulting verse 29, where the same persons are addressed as in verse 37.* By Jerusalem is not meant either the city or temple, nor yet the inhabitants in a collective point of view, but, those that had the rule and management of civil and religious affairs; and principally the latter. The meaning seems to be this: 'How often would my ministry have gathered the Jews together, and convinced them of my authority and Messiahship, by which means those calamities and desolations which will shortly come upon you might have been avoided, but ye would not allow them; you agreed that if any man should confess me to be the Messiah he should be excommunicated; ye have taken away the key of knowledge, will not enter into the kingdom of heaven, (gospel dispensation) and those who would enter in ye hinder; behold, your *house* (temple, city, and *people*) is left desolate.' It must be observed, that our Lord did not say 'I would have gathered Jerusalem, but Jerusalem would not,' nor 'how often would I have gathered *you*, and *you* would not;' nor 'how often would I have gathered *thy* children together, but *thy* children would not be gathered;' but 'how often would I have gathered *thy* children and *ye* would not.' The adjective pronoun *thy*, is in the possessive case, and relates to posterity; and therefore must be understood as relating to official characters, and particularly the ecclesiastical part of the community. I cannot conceive if these thoughts have any solid basis, how offers of grace can be included in the

words I am noticing. To make them tell in favour thereof, it must be shewn that God's will is not eternal, invariable, immutable, nor efficient; that would the scribes and pharisees have allowed him he would have offered salvation to their people, and have saved them from eternal flames. But that seeing they would not suffer the people to hear him, he could do nothing for them, and they must therefore perish everlastingly in hell. The just consequence is, that there are thousands of Jews in everlasting misery for whom he laid down his life, and whom he would have saved but their rulers hindered him. And that though they were willing and anxious to hear him, and to gather about him, yet all their desires and wishes were crushed by the prevailing influence of their rulers:—that Christ beheld this, pitied their condition, commiserated with them, but could render no assistance.

It will also be necessary to shew, whether such things can be with safety attributed to God; and, if so, whether they are in reality worthy of his character. It appears to me, that for people to attempt to prove offered grace and general invitations from this passage, is only to lose themselves in a wilderness of incongruities, or to shroud themselves in a tissue of mystification. And could any individual combine with the pen of Petrarch, the muscles of Hercules, and the longevity of Methuselah, he would not accomplish the task. I, however, may be mistaken in this point as well as others; and should that be the case, I will say, that no person will be more happy to be corrected than myself; truth is my aim in publishing my thoughts.

John v. 40. “*And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.*”

Persons of undisciplined ideas, contend for an offer of grace being couched in these words, because it is thought, Christ could not have upbraided them with neglect of coming to him had he not have made them an offer of salvation.

In reply to this, I remark, it is not clear that a

spiritual coming to him is intended, nor that a spiritual life is implied.

Reference seem to be had to their sufferings and destruction by the Romans, which they would not avoid by receiving his mission and attending his ministry. This is the sense which the subject matter of the discourse seems to support, for which many arguments might be brought, and for which consistency must always plead.

It will be clearly seen, that the drift of our Lord was to vindicate his conduct, by asserting and proving his divinity; in which he succeeded to the great dismay and confusion of his enemies. It will greatly assist our minds in understanding this scripture, if we can ascertain to whom the words were directed, whether to the Jewish people *generally*, or to the Sanhedrim *particularly*. I am inclined to think the latter; which, according to Maimonides, was composed of both ecclesiastics and laics. Amongst the former were both priests and levites, and amongst these, some of the well-known enemies of the promised Messiah. And if we mark the 14th and 15th verses, we shall find something suggested which seems to favour this idea; Jesus found the man in the temple, made himself known to him, and cautioned him against ever pursuing his former line of conduct; and we are informed the man *departed* and told the Jews. Now the time when this occurred was at some memorable feast at Jerusalem; probably the passover, when the concourse of people must have been prodigious, seeing all the males were commanded to attend. The man was found *in the temple*, probably the outward court, where persons were walking about, and where our Lord identified the subject of his miraculous power. This person *departed* from Christ, to tell the Jews who performed the miracle which had excited so much irritation and interest. That he left the temple seems clear, and went either to the pool of Bethesda, or to the Sanhedrim. To the latter I think, and that for these two reasons. *First*, that he might convince the Sanhedrim that Christ was the promised

Messiah, or a divine person. The information which he gave was not from any enmity towards his benefactor, but from the best of motives; and with a view no doubt to proclaim his greatness, also to establish his honour, character, and reputation, where they were the most questioned. *Second*, ver. 33. refers to the deputation which was appointed to wait on John the Baptist, (see chap. i. 19.) and must therefore be addressed to those who sat in council, inspected the mission and doctrines of prophets, and swayed the affairs of the nation. We may therefore suppose, Jesus Christ was standing before the Sanhedrim, and that he justly upbraided them for their neglecting to attend his ministry, properly examining his works, and for not deliberately weighing the evidence in favour of his office and doctrine. Had they have done these things they would not have crucified the Lord of life and glory, their temple would not have been destroyed, nor themselves scattered to the winds.

To support this sense, many arguments might be collected. One argument might be drawn from ver. 34. "*These things I say that ye might be saved.*" This seems to me clearly to refer to their reception of him as the anointed and sent of God, by which their safety would have been established. For we cannot consistently suppose, that the testimony of John respecting Jesus Christ, if it had been implicitly believed, would have saved their souls eternally, but we may conclude that it would have saved them in a political point of view, which was the nature of the salvation mentioned in the 34th verse. And of course, the only life which such a salvation necessarily includes, is one of a natural or political description. At all events, it cannot imply that life which stands in Christ, flows through his blood, and is hid with him in God.

Another thing in favour of such an interpretation is, the affinity between the 34th and 40th. The address is by no means varied. Verse 39th is a direction to search the scriptures, in which they *thought* they had eternal life, because they represented him in a very luminous point of view; both the style and strain is exactly the

same. Here it may be remarked, that the scriptures cannot *give, procure, nor apply* eternal life: the *first* proceeds from the Father, the *second* was accomplished by the Son, and the *third* is governed by the agency of the eternal Spirit. The scriptures may be the instrument of implanting it, and its food and nourishment when implanted; but it cannot be the *original, intermediate, or practical* causes. *Mercy, merit, and might*, seem to be the three grand causes of redemption, and to embrace that life which is connected with all the riches of grace and glory. The scriptures *reveal* these things, as well as testify of the *person, mission, and work* of the Redeemer; and to search the scriptures seem a reasonable duty, but requires no supernatural assistance; and was what they ought to have done, before they rejected his claims and persecuted his person.

It may likewise be remarked, that though the mode of reasoning by our Lord, was every way calculated to prove his Messiahship, it was by no means sufficient to regenerate those to whom it was directed. Had they have been made new creatures, it must have been by divine power,—a power over which they had no control, nor no desire to feel practically applied, and which is only put forth in behalf of the church of the living God. But how could Christ justly reproach them for not having that life by their own exertions, which is the free gift of God through Christ, which none but the elect can enjoy, by election-interest and by the covenant agency of the Holy Spirit. How they could be upbraided for not enjoying such a life, by the use of inefficient and even impracticable means, is certainly not within the field of my perception. I can easily conceive, how reprehensible they were for rejecting the Messiah, because they had abundance of evidence in his favour, and were well qualified to collect and weigh that evidence; but I cannot imagine how a conviction of the truth, object, and end of his mission, could have acted beyond its natural sphere, as it certainly must, if it had produced a spiritual change in them. If such an idea would not confound things which ought to be kept distinct, introduce confusion into the gospel plan, rob the

Holy Ghost of his work and glory, and place the government of God in a very serious position, I shall frankly confess that I am very much mistaken in my view of things. But allow the sense that I have chosen, and the *harmony, distinction, and order* of gospel truth is preserved. The nature of the benefit suggested will correspond with the nature of the duty implied, and point out the advantage which a believing in him as the promised Saviour would have yielded; even their future peace and prosperity. Nothing more than this was intended; if there was, it must be proved that an acknowledgment of him as the Messiah from a conviction of his character, was connected with everlasting life: which it is thought will be no easy task, when it is recollected that one day they spread their garments on the road, and offered him every honour which his office demanded. and very shortly after were as clamorous for his crucifixion as they had been noisy in his praise. And others, who were so well satisfied with the authenticity of his character, that they would have taken him by force and made him a king, had he not have adopted measures subversive of their carnal designs, were soon dispersed when their ideas were perplexed and overthrown. I leave the enquiring reader to judge if the sense I have given is not to be preferred, being more natural, easy, and agreeable to the analogy of faith. I feel persuaded that he will think with me in this point, that the passage contains no offer of salvation, nor no hint of general redemption.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Much stress is laid upon the words, *all the world and every creature*; and it is concluded, that because the gospel was to be preached to every creature, an offer of grace is made to all mankind. Though nothing more seems intended than this, the gentiles were to participate in the blessings of sovereign mercy, through redemption, and no longer to be excluded from the privi-

leges of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The middle wall of partition was broken down, and the news of redemption was no longer to be confined within the precincts of Judea. That this must be the meaning, will appear from the following suggestions:—

1. *There is no evidence to prove that the disciples ever did go into every part of the world.* It is even questionable whether any of them visited either Britain or France; and still more doubtful whether they ever reached Lapland, or preached to the Australians of New South Wales. I know of no source from whence evidence can be derived in favour of such ideas.

2. *In the scale of probability, the difference is as ninety-nine to one, against their preaching the gospel to every creature.* If we consider their age, the place from whence they emigrated, the means by which they travelled, the time which they sometimes remained at one place, and the violent and untimely deaths which some of them met, are considerations which must prejudice the mind against the sense which many persons wish to support. But,

3. *It was impracticable.* Supposing that the sum total of mankind was seven hundred millions of souls, an estimate which perhaps would have excluded nearly one hundred millions; but supposing the above is correct, it was impossible that they could preach the gospel to every creature. Allowing them to preach two hundred times every year, and each time to address an auditory to the amount of two thousand persons, it would take twelve persons upwards of one hundred and eighty years to accomplish the task. Now when it is considered that the apostles travelled principally on foot, the time taken up by judicial examinations and imprisonments, the length of time they tarried at certain places, and the frequency of their return to visit the mother churches, together with other difficulties, such as the length of time they must tarry at one place, or at least visit every place twice, in order that those who were infants might hear the gospel when adults,—the length of time they must be on the water, and other circumstances, render the thing absurd in conception, and

impossible in its execution. It can only mean that they were to preach the gospel in gentile lands, and that there was ample scope for their exertions.

If an offer of grace is made to all mankind by the gospel, it ought to be shewed that the gospel is always preached to all mankind. But this, I presume, will never be attempted. The state of religion in the present day is sufficient to overturn every effort of that description. The following statement will shew pretty accurately the present state of religion.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Polytheists</i> | 466,000,000 | <i>viz.</i> |
| Fetiché Worshippers..... | 124,000,000 | |
| Budhists..... | 169,000,000 | |
| Brahmins | 115,000,000 | |
| Lamaïtes | 58,000,000 | |

Those who acknowledge and worship but one God.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <i>Antichristians</i> | 133,970,000 | <i>viz.</i> |
| Mahomedans..... | { Sunnites | 72,000,000 |
| | { Schiïtes | 43,000,000 |
| | { Ismaelites | 190,000 |
| Jews | 9,000,000 | |
| Confucians | 5,000,000 | |
| Nankinists..... | 4,000,000 | |
| Jorastians | 780,000 | |

Professors of Christianity 274,278,000

Out of these there are

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Roman Catholics | 169,150,000 | |
| 2. Monophysites 6,276,000 <i>viz.</i> | { Jacobites | 3,526,000 |
| | { Masonites | 150,000 |
| | { Armenians | 2,200,000 |
| | { Nestorians | 400,000 |
| 3. Greeks 41,375,000 <i>viz.</i> | { Russo Greeks .. | 35,375,000 |
| | { Eastern ditto .. | 6,000,000 |
| 4. Anglicans | 15,050,000 | |
| 5. Lutherians | 16,000,000 | |
| 6. Reformed....12,240,000 <i>viz.</i> | { Proper reformed | 7,400,000 |
| | { Presbyterians .. | 4,800,000 |
| 7. Evangelics | 8,200,000 | |
| 8. Professors of various sects | 6,027,000 | |

Of these there are—

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Independents | 3,800,000 |
| Methodists..... | 1,500,000 |
| Quakers | 200,000 |
| Menonites | 200,000 |
| Herrenhutens | 100,000 |
| Baptists | 99,000 |
| Unitarians | 60,000 |
| Swedenborgians | 56,000 |
| Fileppines | 12,000 |

It will be seen by this statement, that out of nearly nine hundred millions of immortal and responsible creatures, the gospel is not preached to above the *twentieth* part of them!! This is an appalling consideration, and seems to overwhelm the sentiment of offered grace and universal redemption.

Lastly, the phrase *every creature*, was an idiom of speech. Examples of this kind may be seen, quoted from rabbinical writings, in Dr. Gill's exposition of the passage. It appears from those extracts, that the gentiles were frequently understood by the phrase, *the creatures*. And we may allow ourselves to think, that the scriptures sometimes use the same phraseology in the same popular sense. Thus Rom. viii. 22. "we know that the whole creation, (margin, *every creature*) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It is extremely probable, that the gentiles, as distinguished from the Jews, are intended in this perplexing passage. In the same sense the phrase seems to be used in Col. i. 23. "which was preached to *every creature under heaven*." The apostle could only mean, that the gospel had not been confined to the natural descendants of Abraham, but had been preached, and preached extensively too, to the gentiles, to barbarian, to Scythian, bond and free.

The apostles could only understand by their commission, that they were not to confine their ministry to the Jews, but were to publish a crucified Christ in gentile lands. And it does not appear, that though they were to go among the gentiles, they were to go where they pleased; for, we find, that the Holy Ghost prohibited them from preaching the word in (proconsular) Asia, and suffered them not to go into Bithynia. Acts xvi. 6, 7. The reason of this was, doubtless, because the Lord had no chosen people to call by the ministry of the apostles, at least not at that time. And this seems to suggest, that the gospel is only preached where God has some people to call by his grace; and that not any thing can *forward* their conversion, nor any thing *retard* it, or *prevent* their being born again. The conversion of God's people is as *sure*

as their election is *safe*, which observations are sufficient of themselves to overthrow the mistaken notion of offered mercy. The writer of these lines by no means think eternal election, and immutable fixation, is any infringement on the creature's will; or in any conceivable manner destructive of moral agency; or have any tendency to separate the means from the end, but rather to render the union of means and ends permanent and indivisible. But offers of grace seem to have no more necessary connection with the gospel, than a dark lantern has with a finger post. At least, not in my view.

Acts xvii. 30. "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.*"

It is frequently urged by many, that if all men are every where commanded to repent, then there must be a possibility of all men every where being saved; which is thought to make very strongly for the notion of offered grace.

It may not be altogether irrelevant to remark, on the passage just cited, that by God's winking at iniquitous conduct, we are not to consider him as either justifying their character, or conniving at their practices: but, that he sovereignly withheld the gospel from them, denied them the means of grace, and, by not exercising any marked displeasure towards them, he acted as if he overlooked such conduct. But now the *times* were altered, it was the accepted time and the day of salvation; the offended Sovereign of the earth would no longer allow such conduct to pass unnoticed, but was determined to mark in a judicial form, and in a very signal manner, his just displeasure at obstinate and perverse-minded men. He had published his gifts, required his rights, disclosed his character, revealed his authority, and demanded a reformation. They had now a revelation to direct them, and preachers to instruct them, and therefore, were inexcusable for continuing in their idolatrous practices. I might justly dismiss this passage without any further remarks, but as there

is sometimes in this controversy great weight laid on the nature and doctrine of repentance, I will, once for all, just glance at the subject. I remark,

Repentance is diversified in its nature. This must be admitted, or the bible and facts contradicted. Repentance may be distributed into four branches, thus; *rational, national, systematical, and spiritual.*

1. *Rational* repentance consists in persons acting consistently with the dictates of reason and sober sense, after they may have long abused them, by acting more like monsters than men; more resembling senseless brutes than sensible beings. If a person has abused his constitution, beggared his family, betrayed his trust, and insulted his Maker, by the hateful practice of drunkenness, whenever he forsakes such practices to pursue consistent measures, and to encourage sober habits, he then acts like a rational being, and his repentance is that of a reasonable creature. This is the *duty* of every person who has deformed the rule of moral conduct; but it requires no offers of grace to effect it, seeing both the principles and motives are within the scope of every person's ability and interest,—*within the compass of their ability*, for it will be readily granted, let persons take which side of the question they please, that the human mind is qualified to pursue any train of thought, and to prompt the body to any line of action, within its own sphere. It requires no divine agency for a person to attend the house of God, any more than it does to convey him to a theatre. One common principle of existence, and moral feeling, possesses general adaptations, to all the purposes within the circle of natural and moral existence. To act rationally requires no foreign power, the introduction of no new principle, nor the creation of any new faculty—*stands related to every person's interest, both in this world and the other.* *In this world*:—inasmuch as it may avert impending judgments. This was the case with Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 28. *In the next*:—for every man shall be judged according to his works, and every idle word that they speak they shall give an account. Eccles. xii. 14. Matt. xii. 36. And we have the most veracious

testimony, in support of the doctrine of degrees of misery, in the awful regions of hatred and horror; seeing it is most positively declared, that God will *render* to every man according as his work shall be. Prov. xxiv. 12.; Matt. xvi. 27.; Rev. xx. 12, 13; xxii. 12. The tangled skein of life shall be completely unravelled; the secret sources of iniquity fully developed, and the nature, number, and magnitude of transgression nicely discriminated. Every man's conduct will be thoroughly sifted, so that all his blacks and whites, rights and wrongs, will have a lucid representation. Justice, guided by omniscient discrimination, will proportion with critical accuracy, the extent of *suffering* to the extent of *sinning*. He will lay righteousness to the line, and judgment to the plummet. The Almighty will distribute sorrows in his anger, measure out his fury into the cup of anguish, and inflict his displeasure in righteous retribution.

Did the drunkard but think on these things, one would imagine, that it would be enough to make him dash the mantling cup to atoms. Enough

“ To make him clench his teeth and not undo 'em,
 “ To suffer wet damnation to run through em.”

Similar things might be said of other characters: and, should these lines ever happen to fall into the hands of immoral characters, they are earnestly requested, to remember that they are accountable creatures; that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in *righteousness*, and that their conduct in this life, should they die in their sins, will regulate their misery in *that day*, and through all eternity. They will bear in mind, the impolicy and the awfulness of *heaping up wrath* against the day of judgment.

2. *Repentance may be considered in a national point of view.*

This has for its object, the prevention of national calamities, and the promotion of civil and commercial interests. The case of the Ninevites is to the point in hand: their repentance was *rational* in its nature, and *national* in its extent. It will be sufficient to refer

the reader to the prophecy of Jonah, remarking, that many of the exhortations of the old testament must be viewed in the same light, such as washing and cleansing the heart, breaking up the fallow ground of their hearts, circumcising the foreskin of their hearts, &c.

3. *Systematical* repentance, is a renunciation of erroneous opinions, upon a discovery of some latent truths. Thus, Socinians and Arminians may discover the fallacy of their respective systems; and not only *detect*, but *reject* and abhor them. The disciples themselves entertained erroneous notions respecting the temporal grandeur of their master; who told them, that except they were *converted* and became as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xviii. 3. Meaning, no doubt, his gospel kingdom on earth.

4. *Spiritual repentance* is a *gift*, and not a *command*. Acts v. 31. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Is a *grant*, and not an *acquirement*. Acts xi. 18. And, if it is a spiritual gift or grant, then it must be a spiritual blessing, and if so, the church must have had it in Christ, before the foundation of the world. Eph. i. 3. If it is a spiritual blessing, it cannot be construed into a *formal precept*, binding on all men without distinction. Spiritual repentance, as a disposition, or state of feeling, is not produced by an *offer* of grace, but by a *gift* of grace. In short, repentance is the *consequence* of grace implanted, and not the *cause* of its implantation.

By observing these distinctions, we shall find ourselves materially assisted in seeking to ascertain the relation of mankind to the moral government of God, and the relation of his church to spiritual affection. I feel persuaded, that these views of the subject will accord with the analogy of faith, and will be found to harmonize with all the parts of scripture, and likewise, with the whole system of comprehensive and accomplished redemption. Nor do I know of one single scripture that enforce repentance, but what will be found to agree with the relations which men sustain to God. I am not aware, I had nearly said I was *positive*, that there is no scripture in the form of either exhortation

or precept, that represent spiritual repentance as the duty of natural men. The *exercise* of the principle unquestionably is, but wherever the principle inheres, the person is no longer a *mere* natural man, and therefore, must be considered as having a special interest in Christ Jesus. No argument, therefore, can be drawn from this passage, in support of offered grace, except it can be proved that offers of grace are held forth as an excitement to *natural acts*, to keep off corporeal judgments, promote civil interest, and carry on the government of God in this lower world. But as this, I think, will probably never be attempted, I dismiss the subject without offering any further remarks.

2 Cor. v. 20. *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

These words are invariably employed to prove general invitations, offered grace, and universal philanthropy. To counteract these ideas, we only need mark the *inscription, salutation, and exhortation.*

First, the *inscription.*

In the first epistle, it runs thus:—*Unto the CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth, to THEM that are SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS, CALLED to be SAINTS, with ALL that in every place CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, both theirs and ours.*

In the second, it stands thus:—*Unto the CHURCH OF GOD, which is at CORINTH, with ALL the SAINTS which are in all Achaia.*

By these inscriptions, the following things are indicated. 1. That there were some persons at Corinth, and in the regions of Achaia, distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants among whom they resided. 2. That these singular characters, the apostle denominated *saints*, and recognized them as the *church of God.* 3. That he directed both his epistles to *them*, and not to those from whom they were discriminated. 4. That he wrote both his epistles for the *benefit* of the *church.* 5. That whatever the two letters saith, it saith to *them* to whom they were directed—it speaks to them *exclu-*

sively. 6. That their contents being designed solely for them, cannot possibly be applied to any others, but those who sustain the same relation, and are in similar circumstances. 7. As unregenerate sinners do not sustain the same relations, nor are in the same circumstances, the matter of the two epistles cannot be applied to them. 8. That as the language cannot be applied to unbelievers, but to saints *only*, the idea of indiscriminate invitations, obligatory believing, and offered salvation, can receive no support, neither from this scripture, nor any other of the same description. Persons cannot apply *particular* things to *general* purposes. This, therefore, is one good argument against the general interpretation of the passage.

Second, the salutation.

In both the epistles, it is found thus: *grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* A double blessing from a double spring. In this salutation, we cannot fail to mark, 1, the nature of those favours the apostle wished them to enjoy, viz. *grace and peace*; which form of expression seem to comprehend *all spiritual enjoyment*. 2. The double source from whence these supreme favours flow. From God, *our Father*, and from the *Lord Jesus Christ*. This points out the channel in which the streams of sovereign favour and endless peace for ever run. It is from Zion's father and friend, salvation's fulness stream. *Relationship* gives *right* to ancient grace and present peace. If he is *our Father*, then we are his children; and if his children, then his heirs; and, if his heirs, then *joint heirs* with Christ Jesus. The patrimony of the saints arose out of relationship, is settled by covenant, and vested in the first born among many brethren; who is the appointed heir of all things, by whom also the worlds were made: so that all things are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. See Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 17. Heb. i. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 23. The apostle wished them the enjoyment of those mercies, which were richly united with their relation. 3. It is clear the apostle could think nothing about preaching, or writing to them upon