

sense, be *the land of desire, and the heritage of glory*, as some read the words. Or the heritage of God the Omnipotent Governor of the nations, as the LXX. But they could never be brought into the church above, by offers of grace and tenders of mercy made to them below. *I said thou shalt call me Father.* “ Shall he not from this time be called my Father, the guide of my youth?” Jer. iii. 4. Blessed for ever be his name, he has the plan of sovereign salvation in his own hands. He formed it without help, carries it on without assistance, and will complete it without alteration. It is a plan free from defection, pursued without difficulty, and will guide him to the close of his operations without a supplement. It is not shaded by perplexity, embarrassed by inconsistency, nor defeated in uncertainty. It sprang from his love, is nurtured by his blood, and executed by his Omnipotent strength. No foe can destroy it, nor no friend can improve it. It involves the dissolution of a thousand other plans, a thousand empires, and perhaps a thousand worlds; but as for itself, it is as interminable as his throne, and will remain compact and united should all creation be disjointed, and nature lay stretched in ruins before the eternal throne.

Jer. xv. 19. *If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.*

In whatever light these words are contemplated, they must convey the idea of discrimination. By the phrase precious and vile we may understand,

I. Truth and error.

Truth is precious seed, Psalm cxxvi. 6. and precious food, Isaiah lv. 2, 3. There is the truth of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead—absolute and eternal election—the everlasting covenant of grace—the headship of Christ—the secret union of the church to her glorious head—her redemption—pardon—justification—perseverance and glorification. Lo, these are parts of his truth, but how small a portion of them are heard. Now these are to be separated from

erroneous notions; such as conditional election—no union before faith—particular redemption with a universal sufficiency—offering Christ to all when he has only died for some—inviting all to come, when they have no capacity to receive, no desire for spiritual things, nor no interest in them—were never elected, represented, nor redeemed by Christ Jesus—will never be called, pardoned, justified, nor saved. These things, like chaff, are light, volatile, dry, and destitute of nutriment; and are no more like the pure, precious, substantial, and soul-enriching doctrines of the bible, than the despicable chaff is like the precious grain. They are the vile notions which Pelagius, Arminius, and Wesley have openly vindicated; and others long before them. Error is as light and changeable as the wind, but truth is as solid and immutable as a rock. You can never succeed in getting a transcript of error, for its features are not to be copied. As well might you attempt to paint the camelion of yesterday by the camelion of to-day; or to detain a flash of lightning for half an hour in order to take its portrait in full length; or to request Proteus to stand, until with mallet and chisel you personified immutability. It is airy and flippant, hopping from one proposition to another, till it perches itself upon conclusions—conclusions as frail, as the principles are false, or the notions are airy. In our Lord's day error was chiefly defended by a sect of people called *pharisees*; but their notions became so exposed, that the sect has long since disappeared. There are no pharisees now, though there are thousands of people who adhere to the same things, in different forms. The word *pharisee*, was not descriptive of sentiments entertained, but of an appellation assumed. It did not point out a theological error, but referred to a religious *character*, just in the same manner Pelagian, Arminian, Wesleyan, &c. define no system, nor point out any untruth, but are used in an exclusive sense to designate certain individuals. Many persons object to the phrase Arminians, &c. choosing rather to use the words, *scribes*, and pharisees. What can this be but temporizing? Suppose that in the year 4000 instead of 1729 a person by the name

of John Wesley had come from under some of the famous doctors of the law, and by austerity, assiduity and craft, he succeeded in attracting public attention and making proselytes to his new religion; suppose also that by a regular mode of living, and high-sounding pretensions to morality, they acquired the name of *Methodists*; and the followers of Master John were sometimes called *Wesleyans* and sometimes *Methodists*, of which appellations they were extremely proud themselves; *query*, would not our Lord have addressed them by the name of either Wesleyans or Methodists? or would he have preferred designating them by an appellation, monopolized by a professing sect in the religious days of Enoch? but which sect was swept away by the flood, as the pharisees were destroyed by the overthrow of Jerusalem? and would the pharisees have considered themselves to have been identified by the appellation, or to fall within the scope of its meaning? Certainly not. And suppose further that we had in the present day a sect of people called and known by the name of pharisees, which held for substance exactly the same doctrines that the Wesleyans did in the days of Christ, would it be wrong to call them pharisees, because there existed Wesleyan in the day of Christ, who fell under his censure and displeasure? I cannot see why it should be thought either abusive or rude, to call men and things by their proper names. Every party have their name, and are proud of their respective appellations. Talk to an Arminian about pharisees and the censures which our Lord passed upon them, and he will not be offended. I am not a pharisee he will say to himself. But serve the noble system as you examine the stately animal, in order to see if you could identify it as the same that was in such a place and at such a time—divest it of its cumbrous trappings, and examine it in simple style. Divest Wesleyanism or Methodism of all its varnish and tinsel; reduce to simple order the complicated plaits of phraseology; remove the patches and feathers of millinery by which it is adorned; tear away the illusive sophisms by which it is festooned; strip it of all detail to examine its

principles, and then show by conclusive reasoning that the principles of both systems are the same,—that Jesus Christ addressed those that held such sentiments in popular terms, and that had John Wesley, or Mr. Arminius lived in those days, he would have described them and their followers by names which could not well have been misunderstood. No doubt he would have called them by their proper names as he did the pharisees. And when a man in holy orders ascends his observatory, and espy a person of high sentiment among his practical flock, he is not afraid to cry vile *antinomianism*, nor ever dream of incurring a penalty by raising such an alarm. Or if his hearers should be free from such obnoxious things and pestilential beings, he can easily conjure up their shadows, in order to let his hearers see what a fund of pugilistic science he possess, how expertly he can lay them in the dust. If his holy zeal and fruitful imagination should happen to teem from his pen, he depicts it as destitute of features—a mere mass of hideous, shapeless, memberless deformity: an abortion; a monster without sense, or soul, or symmetry; an animated wen: a blind but virulent excrescence composed of the worst humours of a corrupt impostor,—*beautiful* Babel of figures—demoniacal disturber—fostered by perversions of scripture and indulgent to human depravity, as beginning by libelling God and ending in corrupting man,—without intellect or feeling, or the capacity of benevolent desire—surveying the wreck of the reprobate with savage satisfaction;—abusing an eternal truth, and subsisting by an eternal lie—monster of perversion, and series of absurdity—*anti-evangelical* enormity—a mass of moral and intellectual putridity—destroying benevolence and virtuous enthusiasm by its contaminating touch. As ridiculing reason—hating imagination—despising elegance, and counting eloquence, heresy; contemplating taste, learning and extensive acquirements as unpardonable sins, antinomian pestilence—the very vampire of a church—destroying the usefulness and comfort of some of the best of men—exciting dissatisfaction—suspected

of persecuting its victim to death, more than once—secretly sucking the vital element of ministerial reputation and congregational purity, until with murderous malignity it succeed in completing its sanguinary purpose. Poisoning the very fountain of morals—an error not of the head but heart—having a tendency to destroy the fear of sin, and which is unblushingly avowed by some of its *advocates*—a set of bold and *sometimes* blasphemous opinions, repugnant alike to the natural and revealed character of the Deity; hostile equally to the holiness of earth and heaven; tending to destroy moral sensibility and moral resistance, betraying the very opposite feeling to those by which a mind is either guided to the search, or assisted in the discovery, or governed in the profession of the truth. Contemptuous, dogmatical, and impertinent—despising the calm sobriety of scriptural instruction, the virtuous faithfulness of practical appeals, the benevolent solicitude of the heralds of mercy, in the church or out of it, Antinomianism is the same, equally “*full of all subtilty and mischief*”—“the foe of all righteousness.*”

* This quotation is from an extract of Mr. Binney's 'Memoir of the Rev. Stephen Morell,' by the Reviewers of the *New Evangelical Magazine*, for June, 1827. If I am not very much mistaken, this is the same Mr. Binney that once resided at Bedford, whom the reader will perhaps excuse my observing I once heard; but whom, from his dry formality, stiffness, consequence, and sickening self-importance, I hope never to be condemned to hear again,—at least, not without a pledge of cancelling all the erratas of human frailty by such an act of penance. As Mr. Binney has thought proper to revile some Antinomian preacher in the West of England, no matter who, the reader will forgive my introducing the following curious anecdote. Feeling, while at Bedford, an inclination to hear one of Mr. B.'s weekly lectures, I permitted myself to be guided into the assembly room, for to say 'house of prayer' 'would be a violation, not only of propriety of language, but of accuracy of idea, and would almost amount to a positive proof of mental alienation.' Mr. B. lectured upon the attributes of Deity, and seems to have paid no small attention 'to an odd enumeration of words of the same termination.' Possessing considerable volubility, the fugitive moments flitted away before the subject could be finished. It was therefore necessary to leave what remained behind, in a state of abeyance 'for one week;' and that his hearers might anticipate the future, as well as admire the latter, Mr. B. deemed it expedient to state the leading ideas of the future discourse; when, lo! the following comic scene took place. 'I shall treat,' said Mr. B. 'of his

I do not mean to justify abusive language, nor have I quoted the above because I approve of it, but to show

immutability, durability,—(and another *ility*, which he had forgot)—*ham!*—Immutability, durability,—*ham, ham!*—Immutability, durability,—*ham, ham, ham!*—(loud and confused!)—Really, ladies and gentlemen, I must beg your pardon—I cannot recollect the other *idea*; (i. e. the other *ility*) but I will endeavour to think of it *next week*. Whether Mr. B. succeeded in apprehending and exposing the ‘noble vagrant,’ I cannot inform the reader, as I never afterwards visited the interior of his lecture-room. Now as I am no Antinomian, I of course, do not fall within the scope of Mr. B.’s abusive language; and in relating the above anecdote, I have only met him in his own *style*. The reviewer thought Mr. B. ‘an admirable painter;’ he is certainly a *strong* one, and seems to dip his pencil very warily in *water colours*. I presume it is what *connoisseurs* would call, *a strong expression*. But, *query*, can the sagacious reviewer be identified with *connoisseurs*? Mr. B. says, *Antinomianism has no FORM, nor no IMAGE*, of which one can catch a consistent conception. Now if it has no form nor features, must not Mr. B. have a genius perfectly *unique*, to take a likeness of which he never caught a consistent view? And must not the reviewer be a very admirable judge, in concluding that Mr. B. is an admirable painter? And was it not a very *admirable* question to ask, in the language of Cowper, ‘Behold the picture—is it like?’ Like what? Why a thing that has no *form*, nor no *feature*—something that is *invisible*;—something that was never seen, but is said to have no image nor feature:—all which are admirably depicted by Mr. B.!!! The reviewer might well prefix a note of admiration to his interrogation, for how are we to compare a picture with what was never seen? and what, from the description given, never will be discovered by mortal eyes? The whole must be truly admirable; and one hardly know which to admire most, the painter’s *genius*, or the reviewer’s sagacity; not knowing whether this or that is entitled to the meed, or whether they both may prove alike glorious. After all, the reviewer could not be *serious*, any more than Mr. B. could be *sane*; he must (I think) intend it as a sly sarcasm for I really cannot believe that there exist any such people as Mr. B. talks about. The picture seems to be got up in kindred style and type with *Foot’s* farce of the *Minor, alias, Minor-farce*; and with Bickerstaff’s comedy of the *Hypocrite, alias, Hypocritical-comedy*. What a pity that Mr. B. and a few others can think of nothing more profitable! and how lamentable to recognize in them the same lying spirit that influenced Foot, Bickerstaff, and others of the same stamp! If streams can be so filthy, what must be the state of the ocean? Mr. Binney’s mind must be like a whirlpool of mud, or such noxious streams could never proceed therefrom. “Out of the *heart* proceedeth,” &c. I cannot refrain from thinking that such a *thing* as Mr. Binney talks about, is something like John Wesley’s perfection,—*an imaginary phantom*. But should there be any *thing* like the *picture*, it is hoped the picture and that too, will soon find their way into the muddiest depths of eternal oblivion, and that with a velocity proportioned to their gravitating properties. It is to be hoped there is some merciful chasm, large enough to receive it, deep enough to bury it, and strong enough to retain it in everlasting darkness.

that some people are copiously discriminating when Antinomianism is to be the subject of exposure. But if the chaff of Antinomianism is to be expelled from the pure grain, why should Arminianism be allowed to continue among the precious seed? Offers of grace and general invitations, are things quite as chaffy as Antinomianism. To contend for offered mercy and indiscriminate allurements, and yet deny Arminianism, is like contending for consequences without a cause, or denying a fact while the details are strenuously pleaded for. I do not say that where offers of grace, &c. are made, the gospel is not preached, but I do affirm that the gospel is not preached *while* offers and overtures are made to the congregation. And from my knowledge of sermons which I have seen and heard, there is but a precious little of the gospel in a great many discourses. There is a very great odds in the quantity of chaff and wheat, as after the ratio of a bushel of chaff to a single grain of corn. But what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?

It is frequently remarked that certain persons preach the gospel, but not *all* the gospel; *i. e.* because they do not offer *generally* what God has thought well to give *sovereignly*. As if an ambassador could not declare the sovereign designs of his monarch, to a land of guilty and offending traitors, without making an offer of sovereign favours to every individual; though the favours were only to be given to certain persons whose features were well described by the king himself!! or as if a farmer could not sow his grain, and sow all of it too, without sowing the chaff also. An agriculturist ought to make up his mind to have his theory of germination ridiculed, was he to contend, that not only was it necessary to sow chaff with the grain in order to deposit all the latter, but that it was also necessary to germinate the same; and that the cause of so many failures in the crop was not owing to the want of sun, rain, wind, &c. but was to be attributed to not sowing chaff with the wheat. But what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Was such a systematic as we have been

describing, to favour the public with practical elucidations of his theory, a person would feel that he was entitled to curl the corners of his lips, when he saw Mr. *Wiseacre* encountering a brisk gale of wind, and witnessing the lawless chaff, instead of descending in a mathematical curve to the needy soil plugging in provoking caprice about the poor theorist; endangering his eyes while it supplied his mouth in rich profusion. And this would unquestionably be the case; for what is the chaff to the *wind*. This is a case parallel in principle, and will bear examining. However silly people may talk about religious things, they mostly display *common* sagacity, and sometimes a little more in their civil transactions. What a pity that they should not examine the lesser to be informed of the greater. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, says Solomon, consider her ways and be wise;" and we might say, go to the man of practical understanding, thou simpleton, mark his plans, his measures and his proceedings—consider his ways and be wise.

2. Should character be designed rather than doctrine in the words, the inference is entirely repugnant to offered grace, for that blend and confuse them. But grace given in sovereignty through Jesus Christ, and belonging exclusively to the elect, will always keep up a distinction of character whenever it is preached. Adhere to obligation arising out of relation, and discrimination of character must be preserved. But there can be no separating of the precious from the vile, if general invitations and general offers are made. How can a preacher be as God's mouth when he offers to all, what God intends to *give* to some *only*? How can he reveal his master's will, if he deforms his rule? How is he to appear as God's mouth, if he do not declare what God has said; and that in such a manner as not to be misunderstood though it might be perverted? Ministers of the gospel ought to do as some people engage to do in the most solemn manner—they ought to speak the truth, *all* the truth, and nothing but the truth. To do otherwise is to beguile unstable persons, betray the gospel, and perjure their own souls. Characters ought to be distinguished: we find God has distinguished

them, and to their respective characters, he has affixed promises and threatenings. To separate, therefore, the righteous from the wicked—to point out their different relations, characters and ends—to represent the precious promises of the gospel to the spiritual family, together with their privileges, duties, and blessings; and also to show the sinner his awful state, the threatenings of the bible, and the certainty of their application, is doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of the ministry. The precious is thus separated from the vile, the chaff is fanned from the wheat, the floor is purged, and the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Hypocrites are detected, formalists are roused to enquiry, the humble repentant is encouraged, while Immanuel is glorified, and the preacher appear as God's mouth.

As I cannot examine every passage of scripture which is opposed to the subject of enquiry, I must class them under their respective heads: and, *first*, I argue from all those passages of scripture which set forth the nature and communication of grace, by *rain* and *dew*. Deut. xxxii. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. Psal. lxxii. 6. Isa. xviii. 4.—xxvi. 19.—xxx. 23.—lv. 10. Hos. vi. 3.—xiv. 5. Mic. v. 7. Zec. viii. 12. Now, respecting rain, God is nowhere said to offer it, but he is said to prepare it. Psal. cxlvii. 8; to give it. Isa. xxx. 23; to rain on one place and not on another, Amos iv. 7. And respecting the word of his grace, he says, “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven; and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Iai. lv. 10, 11, 12.

Now what I have to observe, is as follows:

1. Jehovah does not make an *offer* of rain to the earth, neither does he make an offer of grace to sinners. If he does, he destroy the similitude which he employs.

2. The earth cannot prepare itself for the reception of the rain, nor can the sinner prepare himself for the reception of divine grace.

3. The earth cannot therefore regulate the clouds of rain by its voluntary action; neither can a sinner. A sinner can no more merit the grace of God, than the earth can merit or purchase the rain; he has no more control over the streams of grace, than the earth has over the clouds of rain.

4. The rain is therefore given freely, without any reference to the merit of a soil which is under the curse of God. In like manner, grace is given freely, without any reference to the worthiness of the sinner, who is under the curse of God's law. How can there be any merit in an earth under the curse of its author? and how can there be any worthiness in a race of sinners who are children of wrath? There can be no more in the one than in the other.

5. Rain is sometimes represented, as being bestowed in strict accordance with the good conduct of the inhabitants. Lev. xxvi. 4. Deut. xi. 17. So grace is bestowed upon the church, his garden, in strict accordance with the work and merit of Jesus Christ. And as the rain, notwithstanding, flow freely unto the ground, so divine grace flow freely unto us. It is free rain unto the earth, and it is free grace unto us. *Free* grace is guided by *full* merit.

6. The rain is not given for the sake of the earth, but for the sake of the husbandman. Grace is not given for our sakes, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, who is the proprietor of his church, and who have wrought all her works in and for her.

7. Rain is the result of a series of causes. Hosea ii. 21, 22. may be consulted as a compendium of physical theology. Grace is also connected with a series of causes, and Rom. viii. 29, 30, may be referred to as an epitome of revealed religion. The two verses stands thus: "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he, (Christ) might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and

whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." What shall we say to these things? Shall we say they are very favourable to offered grace? that would be absurd. Shall we say, every person have an opportunity of being saved, and that all may be saved if they will! this is impossible in fact, and contemptible in speculation. Shall we aver that there is no such thing as predestination to eternal life? we find falsehood mingled with the breath that dares to make the assertion. Shall we say that offering Christ to all, will, of course, alter the predestinating purposes of mercy? the conclusion abhors the principle. Shall we affirm, that offers of grace, and universal invitations, are not at variance therewith? that would be proclaiming our utter disregard for consistency and truth. Shall we say that God is unjust? that would be deforming a principle for the sake of an inference. God forbid. Shall we say that he is *wretchedly partial*? that would prove the heart unregenerate, and unreconciled to God. Shall we avow that if he predestinated some, he must make the rest with a design to damn them? We do err, not knowing the scriptures. He made man neither to damn nor to save. He made him for his own glory. See Isai. xliii. 7. Rom. ix. 17. Prov. xvi. 4. Rev. iv. 11. Shall we then try to alter and overturn predestination? As well might we attempt to destroy a rock by lashing it with a feather. Shall we then quarrel with our Maker? Hearken to the prophet's denunciation. "WOE unto him that *striveth* with his Maker! let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or thy work, he hath no hands." Isa. xlv. 9. Shall we then commit sin with all greediness? that would augment the torments of hell. Shall we then sit down in sullen despair? this the gospel forbids. But then we have no invitations to encourage us! The invitations and the promises are to the hungry, thirsty, trembling and seeking soul; and if this is our character, there is no need to despair, for all things are ours, we are Christ's, and Christ is God's: and if it is not, we neither need nor want them. If we are hun-

gering and thirsting for spiritual things, we owe it to predestinating grace, which planned our safety and provided for our necessities; if we are not, it can be but of little consequence to us, *how* divine things are dispensed. To quarrel with a thing that does not concern us, is ridiculous enough; and to contend with the God of our lives, is to incur his severest rebukes, and to ensure a place beforehand in the regions of fire and brimstone. What then shall we say? why, if we say any thing upon the subject at all, let us say, "our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Psal. cxv. 3.

In concluding this article, I must observe, that there is no analogy between the skies pouring down rain, and a person offering the everlasting blessings of free salvation.

II. Another class of scriptures, are those which are found to connect themselves with the ministry of Jesus Christ. The first I shall cite, is Matt. xiii. 11. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

When our divine Lord was questioned as to the propriety of his mode in addressing the multitude, he assigned as a reason the sovereign bestowments of Jehovah. The following things are implied in the answer of Christ to his disciples.

1. That the gospel contains many sublime truths or mysteries. 2. That those sublime truths are above the apprehension of carnal minds. 3. That to know them distinctly and spiritually, is the free gift of God. "To you it is *given*." 4. That as they were of such a sovereign nature, they were not offered. The reason why our Lord did not offer spiritual mercies to the multitude, was, because they were *given* to the *disciples*, and because the multitude had no interest in them. To *you* it is *given*, but to *them* it is not *given*. Our Lord did not say, because to *you* the *offer* is made, but to *them* it is not made; but quite the contrary. The sentiment is this; covenant interest arises out of divine sovereignty, and this guides the measures which Jehovah

employs in his government of the world. It shows that the gospel is preached for the sake of his people, and that all their blessings flow in the channel of sovereignty, and are most freely bestowed upon them. And if these considerations governed the conduct of Christ, and prevented him from making a general tender of salvation, ought not the same considerations to shed their influence over our minds in the present day? Are not his purposes still the same? Are not spiritual enjoyments and spiritual capacities, still the free gift of God? Does not Jehovah abide by the same plan, and proceed by the same rule which he always did? Who can deny these things? But if Jesus Christ thought it *wrong* to make a general overture of mercy, because favour was sovereignly dispensed, by what rule can it be shown that it is *right* in the present day? When he told his disciples that he had given them an *example*, did he not mean that they should imitate him? that they should follow him as their pattern? Do not our Lord's language prove to a certainty, that divine favours are given sovereignly as well as freely? and that such a dispensation must necessarily exclude a universal tender of salvation being made? Let the advocates for offered grace, 'take advice, consider of it, and speak *their minds*.' Judg. xix. 30.

Matt. xv. 26. *But Jesus answered, and said, it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs.* It will be readily allowed, that by the children are meant the Jews; and by the children's meat, the ministry of the gospel. It will also be further acknowledged, that by the dogs are meant the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews. I will also further grant, that the phrase was proverbial, and that our Lord did not use his own language, but used a common form of speech, understood by all the Jews, and most probably by the woman, whose place of residence bordered on the Jewish nation. Now, though I grant all this, I cannot conceive that my argument will be enfeebled, because I have **only to reason from analogy, and from the less to the greater, which will make the inference so much the more**

weighty and conclusive. I presume no person will say, that the passage yields no allusion to ministerial discrimination. For their sakes, no doubt, it was written; and if so, the passage is obviously pointed against the conduct of those who are in the habit of offering grace to all, without exception—inviting all, and throwing the precious promises of the gospel to carnal and unregenerate characters. But supposing there was no immediate design to instruct the ministers of the gospel, is not the argument still very cogent, if we reason from the less to the greater? For if it was not consistent to dispense temporal favours to any but God's people, much more to make an offer of salvation to all men without distinction. If the temporal blessings of the gospel were not to be extended to any but the family, how are we to conceive of salvation, the food of God's people, as being offered or proposed to every individual? The blessings of the cross are designed for the children, and for them *only*; to offer them therefore, to all mankind, is surely to do an unmeet thing. There is no fitness nor propriety in such measures.

Matt. vii. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.* Dogs and swine were both unclean creatures under the law. And so abominable were the former, that they were coupled with common prostitutes, and the price of either of them, being brought into the house of the Lord for a vow, was strictly prohibited, on the ground of their being an abomination to the Lord God of the Hebrews. See Deut. xxiii. 18. The heathens, probably, borrowed the custom from the Jews, for historians have remarked, that dogs are excluded from their temples. We find also, that the Jews were to be *holy men* unto God, and therefore not to partake of an unholy thing. *Ye shall cast it to the dogs.* See Exod. xxii. 31. It was in allusion to this custom, that Jesus Christ said, it is not meet to cast the children's bread unto the dogs—they live upon *unclean* things. Carnal men are often compared to dogs and swine, for

their surly and filthy dispositions: and the sense is, that the doctrines of grace are not always to be cast before such characters; and if not, much more grace and glory offered to them. If making a statement of gospel truth, under some circumstances, subjects the gospel to reproach, how much more offering Christ under any circumstances? A discerning mind must perceive the cheat, and deservedly despise such measures. Mr. Poole observes, ‘the precept doubtless is general, directing the ministers of Jesus Christ to administer the holy things with which they are entrusted, only to such as have a *right* to them, and under prudent circumstances, so that the holy name of God may not be prophaned, nor they run into any needless danger.’ But I will not conceal what some take to be the true idea contained in the words; it is this, ‘our Lord was upon the subject of *reproof*, and it is best to consider the passage as bearing upon that point.’ Admitting this to be true, ministers of the gospel may surely learn something from it; for if reproof is to be administered with so much caution, and with so much regard to suitability of character, much more the blessings of the everlasting gospel.

“He that hateth reproof,” says Solomon, “is brutish.” And therefore his advice is, “reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee;” which seems not much unlike the caution which our Lord gave to his disciples on the mount. But to offer salvation to all mankind, without any distinction of character, is as useless as it is absurd. You might offer a casket of jewels to a herd of swine, but we should think, with Solomon, that it would be ridiculous enough to suppose that they would put them in their snout. Prov. xi. 22. And, query, is not a preacher of great talent, who offers Jesus Christ to all, and who invites all, without distinction, to come to Jesus Christ—who cast his pearls before swine, and give that which is holy unto the dogs; is not such a person something like Solomon’s fair woman, without discretion? You may offer a chest of diamonds to a herd of swine, but the brutes would make no more of them than a heap of pebbles; and no doubt, would prefer a

pailful of grains to either. You may offer them a limpid stream and a bed of roses, but their swinish dispositions would guide them to a dunghill, and as a luxury, would lodge them on the easy soil of a quagmire, or in the more agreeable centre of a goodly portion of uliginous matter. You may offer a fountain of blood, and a safe repose to sinners, but they know not their worth, have no disposition for them, and prefer the filthy slough of iniquity to the purifying grace of God. And you can no more turn sinners into saints, by offering salvation to them, than you can turn swine into men by offering them human food, raiment, and ornaments. You may also dress a dog in human attire, place it at the table with the family, but you cannot teach the sagacious puppy to use a knife and fork. True, you may learn it many pretty things, and some of the family may be very fond of such amusing animals, and may think it a very great piece of severity to keep them from the table, or to close the door against them. But, notwithstanding all the fondness that may be shown, and all the efforts that may be made to transform them into children, and entitle them to an inheritance by heirship, they will still retain their own nature, and will never be admitted to the celestial world. The gates will be opened for none but the ransomed of the Lord—who do his commandments, have a right to the tree of life, and will enter in through the gates into the city. “Without will be *dogs*, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever *loveth and maketh a lie.*” Rev. xxii. 14. 15. Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine. Let christians and ministers listen to this salutary caution, and study well the order, fitness, and propriety of things.

John vi. 60. *Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard, said, this is an hard saying: who can hear it.* It will be observed, that our Lord had been talking about divine sovereignty in the disposition of eternal things. He told the Jews, that though they had seen him, and did not believe, yet, all that the Father had