

AN EXTRACT
OF
A LETTER TO THE REVEREND MR. LAW.

OCCASIONED BY SOME OF HIS LATE WRITINGS.

REVEREND SIR,

IN matters of religion I regard no writings but the inspired. Tauler, Behmen, and a whole army of Mystic authors, are with me nothing to St. Paul. In every point I appeal "to the law and the testimony," and value no authority but this.

At a time when I was in great danger of not valuing this authority enough, you made that important observation: "I see where your mistake lies. You would have a philosophical religion; but there can be no such thing. Religion is the most plain, simple thing in the world. It is only, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' So far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil it." This remark I have never forgotten since; and I trust in God I never shall.

But have not you? Permit me, Sir, to speak plainly. Have you ever thought of it since? Is there a writer in England who so continually blends philosophy with religion? even in tracts on "The Spirit of Prayer," and "The Spirit of Love," wherein, from the titles of them, one would expect to find no more of philosophy than in the Epistles of St. John. Concerning which, give me leave to observe in general, 1. That the whole of it is utterly superfluous: A man may be full both of prayer and love, and not know a word of this hypothesis. 2. The whole of this hypothesis is unproved;—it is all precarious, all uncertain. 3. The whole hypothesis has a dangerous tendency. It naturally leads men off from plain, practical religion, and fills them with the "knowledge" that "puffeth up," instead of the "love" that "edifieth." And, 4. It is often flatly contrary to Scripture, to reason, and to itself.

But over and above this superfluous, uncertain, dangerous,

irrational, and unscriptural philosophy, have not you lately grieved many who are not strangers to the spirit of prayer or love, by advancing tenets in religion, some of which they think are unsupported by Scripture, some even repugnant to it? Allow me, Sir, first to touch upon your philosophy, and then to speak freely concerning these.

I. As to your philosophy, the main of your theory respects,
1. Things antecedent to the creation: 2. The creation itself:
3. Adam in paradise: 4. The fall of man.

I do not undertake formally to refute what you have asserted on any of these heads. I dare not; I cannot answer either to God or man such an employment of my time. I shall only give a sketch of this strange system, and ask a few obvious questions.

And 1. Of things antecedent to the creation.

“All that can be conceived is God, or nature, or creature.”*
(*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 33)

Is nature created, or not created? It must be one or the other; for there is no medium. If not created, is it not God? If created, is it not a creature? How then can there be three, God, nature, and creature; since nature must coincide either with God or creature?

“Nature is in itself a hungry, wrathful fire of life.” (Page 34.)

“Nature is and can be only a desire. Desire is the very being of nature.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part I., p. 20.)

“Nature is only a desire, because it is for the sake of something else. Nature is only a torment; because it cannot help itself to that which it wants.” (Page 34.)

“Nature is the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God.” (Part II., p. 62.)

Is not the last of these definitions contradictory to all that precede?

If desire is the very being of nature; if it is a torment, an hungry, wrathful fire; how is it “the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God?”

“Nature as well as God is antecedent to all creatures.”
(Page 59.)

“There is an eternal nature, as universal and as unlimited as God.” (Page 64.)

Is then nature God? Or are there two eternal, universal, infinite beings?

* Mr. Law's words are enclosed all along in commas.

“Nothing is before eternal nature but God.” (*Ibid.*)

“*Nothing but!*” Is anything before that which is eternal? But how is this grand account of nature consistent with what you say elsewhere?

“Nature, and darkness, and self, are but three different expressions for one and the same thing.” (Page 181.)

“Nature has all evil and no evil in it.” (Page 192.) Yea,

“Nature, self, or darkness, has not only no evil in it, but is the only ground of all good.” (*Ibid.*)

O rare darkness!

“Nature has seven chief properties, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a birth from the Deity in nature.”

Is nature a birth from the Deity in nature? Is this sense? If it be, what kind of proof is it? Is it not *ignotum per æque ignotum*?* “For God is tri-une, and nature is tri-une.”

“*Nature is tri-une!*” Is not this flat begging the question?

“And hence arise properties, three and three.” Nay, why not nine and nine? “And that which brings these three and three into union is another property.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 64.) Why so? Why may it not be two, or five, or nine? Is it not rather the will and power of God?

“The three first properties of nature are the whole essence of that desire which is, and is called, nature.” (Page 69.)

How? Are the properties of a thing the same as the essence of it? What confusion is this! But if they were, can a part of its properties be the whole essence of it?

“The three first properties of nature are attraction, resistance, and whirling. In these three properties of the desire, you see the reason of the three great laws of matter and motion, and need not be told that Sir Isaac ploughed with Jacob Behmen’s heifer.” (Page 37.) Just as much as Milton ploughed with Francis Quarles’s heifer.

How does it appear, that these are any of the properties of nature, if you mean by nature anything distinct from matter? And how are they the properties of desire? What a jumbling of dissonant notions is here!

“The fourth property” (you affirm, not prove) “is called fire: The fifth, the form of light and love.” What do you mean by the form of love? Are light and love one and the

* To prove an unknown proposition by one equally unknown.—EDIT.

same thing? "The sixth, sound or understanding." Are then sound and understanding the same thing? "The seventh, a life of triumphing joy." (Page 58.) Is then a life of triumphing joy, "that which brings the three and three properties into union?" If so, how can it be "the result of that union?" Do these things hang together?

To conclude this head: You say, "Attraction is an incessant working of three contrary properties, drawing, resisting, and whirling." (Page 200.) That is, in plain terms, (a discovery worthy of Jacob Behmen, and yet not borrowed by Sir Isaac.) "Drawing is incessant drawing, resistance, and whirling."

2. Of the creation:—

You put these words, with many more equally important, into the mouth of God himself!

"Angels first inhabited the region which is now taken up by the sun and the planets that move round him. It was then all a glassy sea, in which perpetual scenes of light and glory were ever rising and changing in obedience to their call. Hence they fancied they had infinite power, and resolved to abjure all submission to God. In that moment they were whirled down into their own dark, fiery, working powers. And in that moment the glassy sea, by the wrathful workings of these spirits, was broke in pieces, and became a chaos of fire and wrath, thickness and darkness." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 14, &c.)

I would inquire upon this,

(1.) Is it well for a man to take such liberty with the most high God?

(2.) Is not this being immeasurably "wise above that which is written?" wiser than all the Prophets and all the Apostles put together?

(3.) How can anything of this be proved?—Why thus: "Darkness was upon the face of the deep." What can this mean, but that the fall of angels brought desolation into the very place of this world?" (Part II., p. 49.) What a proof!

Secondly. "The Scripture shows, that the Spirit of God entering into this darkness," that is, into the very place where Satan reigned before, "brought forth a new world." (Page 50.)

Where does it show, that this darkness was the place where Satan reigned? I cannot find it in *my* Bible.

Thirdly. "How could the devil be called the prince of this world if it was not once his own kingdom?" (*Ibid.*)

May he not be so called, because he *now* reigns therein? Is he not now "the ruler of the darkness," or wickedness, "of this world?"

Fourthly. "Had it not been their own kingdom, the devils could have no power here. This may pass for a demonstration, that this is the very place in which the angels fell." (Page 51.)

I doubt it will not pass. Cannot God permit Satan to exert his power wherever it pleaseth him?

Hitherto then we have not a grain of sound proof. Yet you pronounce with all peremptoriness,

"The grounds of true religion cannot be truly known but by going so far back as this fall of angels." (Pages 37, 38.)

Cannot! Positively *cannot!* How few men in England, in Europe, can or do go back so far! And are there none but these, no not one, who knows the grounds of true religion?

"It was their revolt which brought wrath and fire and thickness and darkness into nature." (*Ibid.*)

If it was sin that brought fire in the world, (which is hard to prove,) did it bring darkness, and thickness too? But if it did, what harm is there in either? Is not thickness as good in its place as thinness? And as to darkness, you say yourself, "It has not only no evil in it, but is the only ground of all possible good."

Touching creation in general you aver,—

"A creation out of nothing is no better sense than a creation into nothing." (Page 60.)

"A creation *into nothing*" is a contradiction in terms. Can you say a creation *out of nothing* is so? It is indeed tautology; since the single term *creation* is equivalent with production out of nothing.

"That all things were created out of nothing has not the least tittle of Scripture to support it." (Page 55.)

Is it not supported (as all the Christian Church has thought hitherto) by the very first verse of Genesis?

"Nay, it is a fiction big with the grossest absurdities. It is full of horrid consequences. It separates everything from God. It leaves no relation between God and the creature. For" (mark the proof!) "if it is created out of nothing, it cannot have something of God in it." (Page 58.)

The consequence is not clear. Till this is made good, can any of those propositions be allowed?

“Nature is the first birth of God.” Did God create it or not? If not, how came it out of him? If he did, did he create it out of something, or nothing?

“St. Paul says, All things are of, or out of, God.” And what does this prove, but that God is the cause of all things?

“The materiality of the angelic kingdom was spiritual.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 27.) What is spiritual materiality? Is it not much the same with immaterial materiality?

“This spiritual materiality brought forth the heavenly flesh and blood of angels.” (*Ibid.* p. 57.) That angels have bodies, you affirm elsewhere. But are you sure they have flesh and blood? Are not the angels spirits? And surely a spirit hath not flesh and blood.

“The whole glassy sea was a mirror of beauteous forms, colours, and sounds, perpetually springing up, having also fruits and vegetables, but not gross, as the fruits of the world. This was continually bringing forth new figures of life; not animals, but ideal forms of the endless divisibility of life.” (Part I., pp. 18, 19.)

This likewise is put into the mouth of God. But is nonsense from the Most High?

What less is “a mirror of beauteous sounds?” And what are “figures of life?” Are they alive or dead, or between both, as a man may be between sleeping and waking? What are “ideal forms of the endless divisibility of life?” Are they the same with those forms of stones, one of which Maraton took up (while he was seeking Yaratilda) to throw at the form of a lion? *

“The glassy sea being become thick and dark, the spirit converted its fire and wrath into sun and stars, its dross and darkness into earth, its mobility into air, its moisture into water.” (Part II., p. 29.)

Was wrath converted into sun or stars, or a little of it bestowed on both? How was darkness turned into earth, or mobility into air? Has not fire more mobility than this? Did there need omnipotence, to convert fire into fire, into the sun, or moisture into water?

“Darkness was absolutely unknown to the angels till they fell. Hence it appears, that darkness is the ground of the materiality of nature.” (Page 33.) *Appears*—to whom? Nothing appears to me, but the proving *ignotum per ignotius*. †

* See the *Spectator*.

† The proving of an unknown proposition by one still less known.—EDIT.

“All life is a desire.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 198.) “Every desire, as such, is and must be made up of contrariety. God’s bringing a sensible creature into existence is the bringing the power of desire into a creaturely state.” (*Ibid.*) Does not all this require a little more proof, and not a little illustration?

“Hard and soft, thick and thin, could have no existence, till nature lost its first purity. And this is the one true origin of all the materiality of this world. Else, nothing thick or hard could ever have been.” (Part I., p. 21.) Does not this call for much proof? since most people believe God created matter, merely because so it seemed good in his sight.

But you add a kind of proof. “How comes a flint to be so hard and dark? It is because the meekness and fluidity of the light, air, and water are not in it.” (*Ibid.*) *The meekness of light, and air, and water!* What is that? Is air or water capable of virtue?

“The first property of nature is a constraining, attracting, and coagulating power.” (Page 24.) I wait the proof of this.

“God brought gross matter out of the sinful properties of nature, that thereby the fallen angels might lose all their power over them.” (Page 27.) And have they lost all power over them? Is Satan no longer prince of the power of the air?

“As all matter is owing to the first property of nature, which is an astringing, compressing desire.” (Page 28.) Stop here, Sir. I totally deny, that any unintelligent being is capable of any desire at all. And yet this gross, capital mistake, runs through your whole theory.

“The fourth property is fire.” (Page 49.) Where is the proof? “Which changes the properties of nature into an heavenly state.” (Page 48.) Proof again? “The conjunction of God and nature brings forth fire.” This needs the most proof of all.

“Every right-kindled fire must give forth light.” Why? “Because the eternal fire is the effect of supernatural light.” Nay, then light should rather give forth fire.

“The fire of the soul and that of the body has but one nature.” (Page 52.) Can either Behmen or Spinoza prove this?

3. Of Adam in paradise.

“Paradise is an heavenly birth of life.” (*Spirit of Prayer*,

Part I., p. 6.) How does this definition explain the thing defined ?

“Adam had at first both an heavenly and an earthly body. Into the latter, was the spirit of this world breathed; and in this spirit and body did the heavenly spirit and body of Adam dwell.” (Page 7.) So he had originally two bodies and two souls! This will need abundance of proof. “The spirit and body of this world was the medium through which he was to have commerce with this world.” The proof? “But it was no more alive in him, than Satan and the serpent were alive in him at his first creation. Good and evil were then only in his outward body and in the outward world.” What! was there evil in the world, and even in Adam, together with Satan and the serpent, at his first creation? “But they were kept unactive by the power of the heavenly man within him.” Did this case cover the earthly man, or the earthly case the heavenly ?

But “he had power to choose, whether he would use his outward body only as a means of opening the outward world to him;” (so it was not quite unactive neither;) “or of opening the bestial life in himself. Till this was opened in him, nothing in this outward world, no more than his own outward body,” (so now it is unactive again,) “could act upon him, make any impressions upon him, or raise any sensations in him; neither had he any feeling of good or evil from it.” (Page 9.) All this being entirely new, we must beg clear and full proof of it.

“God said to man at his creation, Rule thou over this imperfect, perishing world, without partaking of its impure nature.” (Page 21.) Was not the world then at first perfect in its kind? Was it impure then? Or would it have perished if man had not sinned? And are we sure that God spake thus?

“The end God proposed in the creation was the restoring all things to their glorious state.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 61.) “*In the creation!*” Was not this rather the end which he proposed in the redemption?

“Adam was created to keep what is called the curse, covered and overcome by Paradise. And as Paradise concealed and overcame all the evil in the elements, so Adam’s heavenly man concealed from him all the evil of the earthly nature that was under it.” (Page 62.) Can we believe that there was any evil in man from the creation, if we believe the Bible?

“Our own good spirit is the very Spirit of God; and yet not God, but the Spirit of God kindled into a creaturely form.” Is there any meaning in these words? And how are they consistent with those that follow? “This spirit is so related to God, as my breath is to the air.” (Page 195.) Nay, if so, your spirit is God. For your breath is air.

“That Adam had at first the nature of an angel, is plain from hence, that he was both male and female in one person. Now, this (the being both male and female) is the very perfection of the angelic nature.” (Page 65.) Naturalists say that snails have this perfection. But who can prove that angels have?

You attempt to prove it thus: “‘In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.’ Here we are told, (1.) That the being male and female in one person is the very nature of angels. (2.) That man shall be so too at the resurrection: Therefore he was so at first.” (Page 66.)

Indeed, we are not told here, that angels are hermaphrodites. No, nor anything like it. The whole passage is: “They who are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels;” (Luke xx. 35, 36;) namely, (not in being male and female, but) in this, that they “cannot die any more.” This is the indisputable meaning of the words. So this whole proof vanishes into air.

You have one more thought, full as new as this: “All earthly beasts are but creaturely eruptions of the disorder that is broken out from the fallen spiritual world. So earthly serpents are but transitory out-births of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 207.)

How shall we reconcile this with the Mosaic account? “And God said, Let the earth bring forth cattle, and creeping thing, and beast. And God made the beast of the earth; and God saw that it was good.” (Gen. i. 24, 25.) Does anything here intimate that beasts or serpents literally crept out of the womb of sin? And what have serpents, in particular, to do with covetousness, or, indeed, with envy, unless in poetic fables?

4. Of the fall of man.

“Adam had lost much of his perfection before Eve was taken out of him. ‘It is not good,’ said God, ‘that man should

be alone.' This shows that Adam had now made that not to be good, which God saw to be good when he created him." (*Spirit of Prayer*, p. 74.) Nay, does it show either more or less than this, that it was not conducive to the wise ends God had in view, for man to remain single?

"God then divided the human nature into a male and female creature: Otherwise man would have brought forth his own likeness out of himself, in the same manner as he had a birth from God. But Adam let in an adulterous love of the world: By this his virginity was lost, and he had no longer a power of bringing forth a birth from himself." (Page 75.) We have no shadow of proof for all this.

"This state of inability is called his falling into a deep sleep." (Page 76.) How does this agree with, "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam?" (Gen. ii. 21.)

"God took his Eve out of him, as a lesser evil, to avoid a greater. For it was a less folly to love the female part of himself, than to love things lower than himself." (Page 77.)

Who can extract this out of the words of Moses? Who can reconcile it with the words of our Lord? "He who made them at the beginning" (not a word of any previous fall) "made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." (Matt. xix. 4, 5.) Is here any intimation, that for a man to love his wife is only less folly than to love the world? "A man ought so to love his wife, even as Christ the Church." Is there any folly in the love of Christ to the Church?

"Marriage came in by Adam's falling from his first perfection." (Page 88.) Does this account do honour to that institution, any more than that memorable saying of an eminent Mystic, "Marriage is but licensed whoredom?"

"Had Adam stood, no Eve would have been taken out of him. But from Eve God raised that angelic man, whom Adam should have brought forth without Eve, who is called the Second Adam, as being both male and female." (Page 79.) Many things herewant proof. How does it appear, (1.) That Eve would not have been, had Adam stood? (2.) That had he stood, he would have brought forth the Second Adam without Eve? (3.) That Christ was both male and female? and, (4.) That he was on this account called the Second Adam?

"The Second Adam is now to do that which the first

should have done." (Page 84.) Is he to do no more than that? no more than a mere creature should have done? Then what need is there of his being any more than a creature? What need of his being God?

"Our having from him a new heavenly flesh and blood, raised in us by his spiritual power, is the strongest proof that we should have been born of Adam by the same spiritual power." (Page 85.)

Had Adam then the very same spiritual power which Christ had? And would he, if he had stood, have transmitted to us the very same benefit? Surely none that believes the Christian Revelation will aver this in cool blood!

"From Adam's desire turned toward the world, the earth got a power of giving forth an evil tree. It was his will which opened a passage for the evil hid in the earth," (I know not how it came there before Adam fell,) "to bring forth a tree in its own likeness. No sooner was it brought forth, than God assured him that death was hid in it: A plain proof that this tree was not from God, but from a power in the earth, which could not show itself, till Adam desired to taste something which was not paradisiacal." (Page 96.)

This is the marvellous in the highest degree, and affords many questions not very easy to be answered. But, waving all these, can anything be more flatly contradictory to the Mosaic account? We read there, "The Lord God formed man. And the Lord planted a garden. And out of the ground made the Lord God every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. ii. 7-9.) Is it not here plainly taught that this tree was from God? that, not the desire of Adam, but the Lord God, made this tree to grow, as well as the tree of life? And when was it that God gave him that solemn warning, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?" (Verse 17.) Not so soon as that tree was brought forth; but when Adam was put into the garden.

"At first, all the natural properties of man's creaturely life were hid in God, just as the natural qualities of darkness are hid till glorified by the light." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 181.) Nay, were they not sufficiently hid by the heavenly man? Need they be hid over and over?

"But when man fell, all these properties broke forth, just as

the darkness, when it has lost the light, must show forth its own coldness, horror, and other uncomfortable qualities." *Exemplum placet!** But, are either coldness or horror natural qualities of darkness? If so, they must be inseparable from it. But who will affirm this?

"Darkness, though contrary to light, is yet absolutely necessary to it. Without this, no manifestation or visibility of light could possibly be." This is absolutely new and surprising. But how is it to be proved?

Thus: "God dwelleth in the light which no man can approach. Therefore, light cannot be manifested to man but by darkness." (Page 189.) Ah, poor consequence! Would not the same text just as well prove transubstantiation?

"Light and darkness do everything, whether good or evil, that is done in man. Light is all power, light is all things and nothing." (*Ibid.*)

I cannot conceive what ideas you affix to the terms *light* and *darkness*. But I forget. You except against ideas. Can you teach us to think without them?

Once more: You say, "Darkness is a positive thing, and has a strength and a substantiality in it." (Page 182.) I have scarce met with a greater friend to darkness, except "the illuminated Jacob Behmen."

But, Sir, have you not done him an irreparable injury? I do not mean by misrepresenting his sentiments; (though some of his profound admirers are positive that you misunderstand and murder him throughout;) but by dragging him out of his awful obscurity; by pouring light upon his venerable darkness. Men may admire the deepness of the well, and the excellence of the water it contains: But if some officious person puts a light into it, it will appear to be both very shallow and very dirty.

I could not have borne to spend so many words on so egregious trifles, but that they are mischievous trifles:—

*Hæ nugæ seria ducent
In mala.†*

This is dreadfully apparent in your own case, (I would not speak, but that I dare not refrain,) whom, notwithstanding your

* The example is pleasing.—EDIT.

† This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Boscawen:—

"These trifles serious mischief breed."—EDIT.

uncommon abilities, they have led astray in things of the greatest importance. Bad philosophy has, by insensible degrees, paved the way for bad divinity: In consequence of this miserable hypothesis, you advance many things in religion also, some of which are unsupported by Scripture, some even repugnant to it.

II. Some of these I shall now mention with the utmost plainness, as knowing for whom, and before whom, I speak.

And, 1. You deny the omnipotence of God.

You say: "As no seeing eye could be created unless there was, antecedent to it, a natural visibility of things," (Why not? Why might not visible things be created at the same instant with it?) "so no creature could come into any natural life, unless such a state of nature was antecedent to it." (Page 60.) "All that God does is, and must be, done in and by the powers of nature." (Page 135.) What then did it avail that, as you elsewhere say, God was before nature? He not only could not then do all things, but he could do nothing till nature existed. But if so, how came nature itself, this second eternal, to exist at all?

"There cannot possibly be any other difference between created beings, than arises from that out of which they were created." (Page 60.) Why not? Who will stay the hand of the Almighty, or say unto him, What doest thou?

"No fruits or vegetables could have sprung up in the divided elements, but because they are parts of that glassy sea, where angelical fruits grew before." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 19.)

But how came those fruits to grow before? How came they to grow in the glassy sea? Were they not produced out of nothing at first? If not, God was not before nature. If they were, cannot he still produce out of nothing whatsoever pleaseth him?

"All outward nature being fallen from heaven," (that we deny,) "must, as well as it can, do and work as it did in heaven." (Page 20.) "*As well as it can!*" What can it do without God, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power? And what can it not do, if he pleaseth? Or, rather, what cannot he do, with or without it?

"Matter could not possibly be, but from sin." (*Spirit of Love*, Part I., p. 23.) That is, in very plain terms, God could not have created matter if Satan had not sinned!

"God could not create man with a soul and a body, unless

there was such a thing as nature antecedent to the creation of man." (Page 30.)

Why could not God do this? Because "body and spirit are not two separate things, but are only the inward and outward condition of one and the same being. Every creature must have its own body, and cannot be without it. For its body is that" (Who would have thought it!) "which makes it manifest to itself. It cannot know either that it is, or what it is, but by its own body!" (Page 32.)

What a heap of bold assertions is here to curb omnipotence And not one of them has a tittle of proof, unless one can prove the other!

But we have more still: "The body of any creature has nothing of its own, but is solely the outward manifestation of that which is inwardly in the soul. Every animal has nothing in its outward form or shape but that which is the form and growth of its spirit. As no number can be anything else but that which the units contained in it make it to be, so no body can be anything else but the coagulation or sum total of those properties of nature that are coagulated in it." (Page 33.)

Astonishing! What a discovery is this, that a body is only a curdled spirit! that our bodies are only the sum total of our spiritual properties! and that the form of every man's body is only the form of his spirit made visible!

"Every spirit manifests its own nature by that body which proceeds from it as its own birth." (Part II., p. 17.)

Does the body then grow out of the spirit, as the hair and nails grow out of the body; and this in consequence of the "powers of nature," distinct from the power and will of God?

To abridge God of his power, after creation, as well as before it, you affirm, farther,—

"This is an axiom that cannot be shaken, Nothing can rise higher than its first created nature; and therefore an angel at last must have been an angel at first. Do you think it possible for an ox to be changed into a rational philosopher? Yet this is as possible as for one who has only by creation the life of this world to be changed into an angel of heaven. The life of this world can reach no farther than this world; no omnipotence of God can carry it farther: Therefore, if man is to be an angel at last, he must have been created an angel; because no creature can possibly have any other life, or higher degree of life, than

that which his creation brought forth in him." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 81.)

I have quoted this passage at some length, that the sense of it may appear beyond dispute. But what divinity! and what reasoning to support it! Can God raise nothing higher than its first created state? Is it not possible for him to change an ox or a stone into a rational philosopher, or a child of Abraham? to change a man or a worm into an angel of heaven? Poor omnipotence which cannot do this! Whether he will or no, is another question. But if he cannot do it, how can he be said to do "whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places?"

Thus does your attachment to a miserable philosophy, lead you to deny the almighty power of God.

2. It leads you, in the Second place, to deny his justice; to abridge this no less than his power.

This I may be permitted to consider more at large; because, though it was allowed by all the wiser Heathens of past ages, yet it is now one main hinge on which the controversy between Christianity and Deism turns. To convert a thousand Deists, therefore, by giving up this point, with the doctrine of justification which is built upon it, is little more than it would be to convert as many Jews by allowing the Messiah is not yet come. It is converting them by allowing all they contend for; by granting them the main point in question. Consequently, it is no other than establishing Deism, while it pretends to overturn it.

I would greatly wish, in weighing what you have advanced on this head, to forget who speaks, and simply consider what is spoken. The person I greatly reverence and love: The doctrine I utterly abhor; as I apprehend it to be totally subversive of the very essence of Christianity.

God himself hath declared, that, in consequence of his justice, he will, in the great day of general retribution, "render to every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil."

But man says, No: "There is no righteous wrath or vindictive justice in God." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 108.) If so, ye may go on, ye children of the devil, in doing the works of your father. It is written, indeed, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." But

this is not literally to be taken ; for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as the wrath of God !

Fear not the bugbear of everlasting burnings. There is not only no everlasting punishment, but no punishment at all ; no such thing in the universe. It is a mere vulgar error !

I should be extremely glad to prophesy these smooth things too, did not a difficulty lie in the way. As nothing is more frequently or more expressly declared in Scripture, than God's anger at sin, and his punishing it both temporally and eternally, every assertion of this kind strikes directly at the credit of the whole revelation. For if there be one falsehood in the Bible, there may be a thousand ; neither can it proceed from the God of truth. However, I will weigh all your assertions. And may the God of truth shine on both our hearts !

I must premise, that I have no objection to the using the words *wrath* (or *anger*) and *justice* as nearly synonymous ; seeing anger stands in the same relation to justice, as love does to mercy ; love and anger being the passions (speaking after the manner of men) which correspond with the dispositions of mercy and justice. Whoever therefore denies God to be capable of wrath or anger, acts consistently in denying his justice also.

You begin: "(1.) No wrath (anger, vindictive justice) ever was or ever will be in God. If a wrath of God were anywhere, it must be everywhere." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 27.) So it is, as sure as the just God is everywhere.

"(2.) Wrath and pain dwell only in the creatures." (Page 28.) Pain is only in creatures. Of wrath, we are to inquire farther.

"(3.) To say, God ever punished any creature out of wrath, is as absurd as to say, He began the creation out of wrath." I conceive, not. It is not as absurd to say, "God is angry at the guilty," as to say, "God is angry at the innocent." Now, it is certain, when God began the creation of man, no guilty men were in being.

"(4.) He must always will that to his creatures, which he willed at the creation of them." True ; and he willed, at the very creation of men, "to reward every one as his work should be."

"(5.) God is incapable of willing pain to any creature, because he is nothing but goodness." (Page 29.) You mean, because his goodness excludes justice. Nay, that is the very question.

"(6.) God can give nothing but happiness from himself,

because he hath nothing else in himself." (*Spirit of Love*, Part I., p. 3.) As if you had said, "God can give nothing but infinity from himself, because he has nothing else in himself." It is certain he has not. He is all infinity. Yet that argument will not hold.

"(7.) God can no more begin to have any wrath after the creature is fallen, than he could be infinite wrath and rage from all eternity." (Part II., p. 4.) No changing the terms. We have nothing to do with rage. This properly means excessive anger. Setting this aside, I answer to the argument, God was infinitely just from all eternity: In consequence of which, his anger then began to show itself, when man had sinned.

"(8.) No wrath can be in God, unless God was, from all eternity, an infinity of wrath." (Page 6.) That is, infinitely just. So he was and will be to all eternity.

"(9.) There must either be no possibility of wrath, or no possibility of its having any bounds." (Page 7.) The divine justice cannot possibly have any bounds. It is as unlimited as his power.

"(10.) Two things show the nature of wrath,—a tempest, and a raging sore. The former is wrath in the elements; the latter is wrath in the body. Now, both these are a disorder; but there is no disorder in God: Therefore there is no wrath in God." (Page 13.)

"A tempest is wrath in the elements; a raging sore is wrath in the body." It is not. Neither the body, the elements, nor anything inanimate is capable of wrath. And when we say, "The sore looks angry," does any one dream this is to be taken literally? The pillars of the argument, therefore, are rotten. Consequently, the superstructure falls to the ground.

In vain would you prop it up by saying, "Wrath can have no other nature in body than it has in spirit, because it can have no existence in body, but what it has from spirit." (Page 15.) Nay, it can have no existence in body at all, as yourself affirm presently after. Yet you strangely go on: "There is but one wrath in all outward things, animate or inanimate." Most true; for all wrath is in animals; things inanimate are utterly incapable of it.

"There can be but one kind of wrath, because nothing can be wrathful but spirit." (Page 18.)

Never then let us talk of wrathful elements, of wrathful tempests or sores, again.

“(11.) Wrath and evil are but two words for the same thing.” (*Ibid.*) This is home; but it cannot be granted without proof.

“(12.) God is as incapable of wrath, as of thickness, hardness, and darkness; because wrath can exist nowhere else but in thickness, hardness, and darkness.” (Page 71.)

So far from it, that wrath cannot exist in thickness or hardness at all. For these are qualities of bodies; and “nothing can be wrathful but spirit.”

“(13.) Wrath cannot be in any creature, till it has lost its first perfection.” (Page 72.) That remains to be proved.

Thus far you have advanced arguments for your doctrine. You next attempt to answer objections:—

And to the objection, that Scripture speaks so frequently of the wrath of God, you answer,—

“(1.) All the wrath and vengeance that ever was in any creature, is to be called and looked on as the wrath and vengeance of God.”

I totally deny that proposition, and call for the proof of it.

“(2.) God works everything in nature. Therefore all death, or rage, or curse, wherever it is, must be said, in the language of Scripture, to be the wrath or vengeance of God.” (Page 55.)

I deny the consequence. The latter proposition does not follow from the former. And indeed it is not true. All death, and rage, and curse, is not in the language of Scripture termed the wrath and vengeance of God.

“(3.) Because the devils have their life from God; therefore, their cursed, miserable, wrathful life is said to be the curse, and misery, and wrath of God upon them.” (Page 53.)

Neither can this be proved, that the devils having their life from God, is the reason why they are said to be under his wrath. Nor does the Scripture ever term their wrathful, miserable life, the wrath or misery of God.

“(4.) Devils are his, as well as holy angels. Therefore all the wrath and rage of the one must be as truly his wrath and rage burning in them, as the joy of the others is his joy.” (Page 54.)

So it seems, the wrath of God in Scripture means no more or less than the wrath of the devil! However, this argument will not prove it. The joy of saints (not of angels that I remember) is styled the joy of their Lord, because he pre-

pared it for them, and bestows it on them. Does he prepare and bestow the rage of devils upon them?

“(5.) His wrath and his vengeance are no more in God, than what the Psalmist calls his ice and his frost.” (Page 74.)

There is nothing parallel in the case. We cannot take the latter expression literally, without glaring absurdity; the former we may.

“(6.) ‘The earth trembled because he was wroth.’ No wrath here but in the elements.”

Nay, if so, here was no wrath at all. For we are agreed, “Only spirits can be wrathful.”

(7.) One more text, usually cited against your opinion, you improve into an argument for it: “‘Avenge not yourselves, for vengeance is mine.’ This is a full proof that vengeance is not in God. If it was, then it would belong to every child of God, or he could not ‘be perfect as his Father is perfect.’” (Page 76.)

Yes, he could in all his imitable perfections. But God has peculiarly forbidden our imitating him in this. *Vengeance*, says he, *is mine*, incommunicably mine; unless so far as he delegates it to those who are in authority. This therefore clearly shows, that God executes vengeance; though justice, not vengeance, is properly in Him.

Having now proved (as you suppose) that God has neither anger nor justice, it remains only to show (which indeed follows by easy and natural consequence) that he never did nor can punish.

“To say, Adam’s miserable state was a punishment inflicted upon him by God is an utter absurdity.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 24.) “His sin had not the least punishment of any kind inflicted upon it by God.” (Page 26.)

This is flat and plain. But let us see how far this account agrees with that which God himself hath given:—

“Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat: In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. ii. 17.) “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not die.” (iii. 4.) “And the woman, being deceived,” did eat; (1 Tim. ii. 14;) “and gave unto her husband, and he did eat.” (Gen. iii. 6.) “And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed. Dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life;” (verse 14;) “and I will put enmity

between thee and the woman." (Verse 15.) "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and" (that is, *in*) "thy conception." (Verse 16.) "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast eaten of the tree, cursed is the ground for thy sake: In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." (Verse 17.) "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." (Verse 19.)

Can any man read this and affirm, "God did not inflict the least punishment, of any kind, either on Eve, or Adam, or the serpent?" With what eyes or understanding then must he read!

But you say, "All that came on Adam was implied in what he chose to himself." (Page 25.) It was. He chose it to himself in the same sense that he who robs chooses to be hanged. But this does not at all prove, that the death which one or the other suffers is no punishment.

You go on: "Fire and brimstone, or manna, rained on the earth, are only one and the same love. It was the same love that preserved Noah, burned up Sodom, and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the Red Sea." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., pp. 72, 78.)

Surely nothing can equal this, unless you add, (which indeed you must do, to be consistent with yourself,) "It is one and the same love which will say, 'Come, ye blessed,' and, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'"

You add: "'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' Here you have God's own word for it, nothing but love chasteneth." (Page 81.) We know his love chasteneth his children. Of these only God is speaking here, as appears from the latter clause of the sentence. And yet we cannot say even as to them, "It is nothing but his love." It is mercy mixed with justice.

You cite one text more: "I have smitten you: Yet have ye not returned to me;" (Amos iv. 9;) and say, "Now, how is it possible for words to give stronger proof?" (*Ibid.*) Proof of what? Not that God did not punish them; but that "in the midst of wrath He remembered mercy."

To these texts of Scripture (wide enough of the point) you subjoin: "The doctrine of atonement made by Christ is the strongest demonstration, that the wrath to be atoned cannot be in God." (Page 85.) Who talks of *wrath to be atoned*? "The wrath to be atoned" is neither sense nor English, though it is a solecism you perpetually run into: (I hope,

not on purpose to puzzle the cause :) That the sin to be atoned cannot be in God, we all allow; but it does not affect the question.

Once more, to silence all contradiction at once, to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, you say, "This (that there is no anger, no vindictive justice in God, no punishment at all inflicted by him) is openly asserted, constantly affirmed and repeated, in the plainest letter of Scripture." Whether this, or the very reverse, is true, will appear from a few out of numberless texts, which I shall barely set down, without any comment, and leave to your cool consideration.

You say, (1.) There is no vindictive, avenging, or punitive justice in God. (2.) There is no wrath or anger in God. (3.) God inflicts no punishment on any creature, neither in this world, nor that to come.

God says,—

(1.) "The just Lord is in the midst of you." (Zeph. iii. 5.) "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." (Psalm lxxxix. 14.) "Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?" (Job xxxiv. 17.) "He is excellent in power, and in plenty of justice." (xxxvii. 23.) "Just and true are thy ways, O King of saints." (Rev. xv. 3.) "Thou art just in all that is brought upon us." (Neh. ix. 33.) "There is no God beside me, a just God and a Saviour." (Isaiah xlv. 21.) "Whom God hath set forth, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

(2.) "The Lord heard their words, and was wroth." (Deut. i. 34.) "The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes." (iii. 26.) "I was wroth with my people." (Isaiah xlvii. 6.) "For his covetousness I was wroth." (lvii. 17.) "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." (Num. xxv. 3.) "His wrath is against them that forsake him." (Ezra viii. 22.) "Thou art very wroth with us." (Lam. v. 22.) "Thou art wroth, for we have sinned." (Isaiah lxiv. 5.) "Who may stand in thy sight when thou art angry?" (Psalm lxxvi. 7.) "I have mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath." (cii. 9, 10.) "In my wrath I smote thee." (Isaiah lx. 10.) "He hath visited in his anger." (Job xxxv. 15.) "God distributeth sorrows in his anger." (xxi. 17.) "I have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." (Lam. iii. 1.) "I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." (Psalm xc. 11.) "He casteth upon them

the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death." (lxxviii. 49, 50.) "At his wrath the earth shall tremble." (Jer. x. 10.) "The land is desolate because of his anger." (xxv. 38.) "By his anger they are consumed." (Job iv. 9.) "The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." (Psalm xxi. 9.) "The Lord turned not from his wrath." (2 Kings xxiii. 26.) "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." (Isaiah v. 25.) "The Lord is slow to anger, and of great kindness; he will not always chide, neither keepeth he his anger for ever." (Psalm ciii. 8, 9.) "The Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." (Joshua vii. 26.) "In wrath remember mercy." (Hab. iii. 2.) "Though thou wast angry, thine anger is turned away." (Isaiah xii. 1.) "Many a time turned he his anger away." (Psalm lxxviii. 38.)

(3.) "I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." (Isaiah xiii. 11.) "Behold, the Lord cometh to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." (xxvi. 21.) "Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?" (Job xxxi. 3.) "I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings." (Jer. xxi. 14.) "I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.) "If ye will not hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins." (Lev. xxvi. 18.) "I will punish all that oppress them." (Jer. xxx. 20.)

Now, which am I to believe? God or man?

Your miserable philosophy leads you, in the Third place, totally to deny the scripture doctrine of justification. Indeed, you do not appear to have the least conception of the matter; no, not even to know what the term justification means. Accordingly, you affirm,—

"Salvation, which all Divines agree includes both justification and sanctification, is nothing else but to be made like Christ." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 53.)

"Regeneration is the whole of man's salvation." (Part II., p. 37.)

"Redemption is nothing else but the life of God in the soul." (Part I., p. 79.)

"The one only work of Christ as your Redeemer is to raise into life the smothered spark of heaven in you." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 45.)

“He is our atonement and reconciliation with God, because by him we are set again in our first state of holiness.” (Part I., p. 10.)

“The atonement of the divine wrath or justice,” (a mere solecism, on which your whole reasoning for several pages is built,) “and the extinguishing of sin in the creature, are only different expressions of the same thing.” (Part II., p. 86.) Nay, the former is an expression of nothing: It is flat nonsense.

“All that Christ does as an atonement, has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man.” (Page 106.)

Here are seven peremptory assertions. But till they are fully proved I cannot give up my Bible.

But you grow bolder and bolder, and say, “The satisfaction of Christ is represented in all our systems of divinity, as a satisfaction made to God; and the sufferings and death of Christ, as that which could only avail with God to have mercy on man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the ground, and nature, and efficacy of this great transaction between God and man is often explained by debtor and creditor; man as having contracted a debt with God, which he could not pay, and God as having a right to insist upon the payment of it.” (Page 91.)

“There is no wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor.” (Page 131.)

“*What is still worse, if possible! Folly of debtor and creditor!*” Surely I would not have spoken thus, unless I had been above the Son of God.

“After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew vi. 9, 12.) “And Jesus said, There was a certain creditor which had two debtors.” (Luke vii. 41.) “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take account of his servants. And one was brought unto him who owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and all that he had. The servant fell down, saying, Lord, have patience with me. And his Lord was moved with compassion, and forgave him the debt.” Yet, afterwards, on his unmercifulness to his fellow-servant, he retracted that forgiveness; “and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you also, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” (Matthew xviii. 23, &c.)

Is not man here represented as having contracted a debt with

God which he cannot pay? and God as having, nevertheless a right to insist upon the payment of it? and a right, if he hath not to pay, of delivering him to the tormentors? And is it not expressly asserted, that God will, in some cases, claim this right, and use it to the uttermost? Upon whom, then, lights this imputation of folly, and of "what is still worse?" "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But if the Son of God did not die to atone for our sins, what did he die for?

You answer: "He died,

"(1.) To extinguish our own hell within us." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 159.)

Nay, the Scripture represents this, not as the first, but the second, end of his death.

"(2.) To show that he was above the world, death, hell, and Satan." (Pages 130, 131.)

Where is it written that he died for this end? Could he not have done this without dying at all?

"(3.) His death was the only possible way of overcoming all the evil that was in fallen man." (Page 129.)

This is true, supposing he atoned for our sins. But if this supposition be not made, his death was not the only possible way whereby the Almighty could have overcome all things.

"(4.) Through this he got power to give the same victory to all his brethren of the human race." (Page 132.)

Had he not this power before? Otherwise, how was he *ὦν, He that is*; "God over all, blessed for ever?"

If Christ died for no other ends than these, what need was there of his being more than a creature?

As you seem never to have employed your thoughts on justification or redemption, in the Scripture sense, I beg leave to subjoin a plain account thereof, wrote by a woman of the last century:—*

"(1.) Christ hath acquired for us a right to eternal life by his satisfaction and merits alone. Neither our repentance nor amendment can be any satisfaction for sin. It is only 'through his blood that we have redemption.' (Ephesians i. 7.) This alone 'cleanseth us from all sin.' (1 John i. 7.) And herein 'was the

* Annae Mariæ a Schurman *Ευκληρία*, *Part* II., p. 118, &c.

love of God manifested towards us, that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' (1 John iv. 9, 10.) So was the Lord 'our righteousness;' (Jer. xxiii. 6;) without which we could not have been justified. As man owed his Creator the perfect obedience of his whole life, or a punishment proportioned to his transgression, it was impossible he could satisfy him by a partial and imperfect obedience. Neither could he merit anything from Him to whom he owed all things. There was need therefore of a Mediator who could repair the immense wrong he had done to the Divine Majesty, satisfy the Supreme Judge, who had pronounced the sentence of death against the transgressors of his law, suffer in the place of his people, and merit for them pardon, holiness, and glory. Accordingly, he 'gave himself a ransom for all,' (1 Tim. ii. 6,) and 'by himself purged our sins.' (Heb. i. 3.) 'He loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.' (Eph. v. 2.) So we read, God 'raised him from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification:' Because our Surety's being discharged by the will and act of the Judge himself, is a full proof that he has paid our whole debt.

"(2.) Nor is there any more sure way to the imitation of Christ, than faith in Christ crucified, in Him 'who suffered for us, leaving us an example,' that we might tread in his steps; who 'died for us, while we were yet enemies,' that we might be 'justified by his blood.' (Rom. v. 9.) Yet it is true, this doctrine finds no place in those who are proud of heart, who love their own reasonings, and have no taste for 'the sincere milk of the word.' But it is precious to them who feel the weight of their sins, who know they 'are by nature children of wrath,' and, at the same time, utterly incapable either of paying the debt, of rising from the death of sin, of conquering themselves, the world, and the devil, or of meriting eternal life.

"(3.) The origin and cause of our redemption is, the ineffable love of God the Father, who willed to redeem us by the blood of his own Son;—the grace of the Son, who freely took our curse upon him, and imparts his blessing and merits to us;—and the Holy Spirit, who communicates the love of the Father and the grace of the Son to our hearts.

"When we speak of this, and of the satisfaction of Christ, we speak of the inmost mystery of the Christian faith. Therefore all the inventions of men ought now to be kept at the

utmost distance; nor can anything certain be established, without the express authority of Scripture. And herein is offered first to our consideration, the only-begotten Son of God, as the Head of the redeemed, the righteous Servant of God, who by the knowledge of himself 'shall justify many.' (Isaiah liii. 11.) Him God hath constituted the 'surety of that better covenant,' (Heb. vii. 22,)—the covenant of grace. And how clearly is his execution of this office described in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah! where the Prophet describes him as 'bearing our griefs,' or sins, 'and carrying our sorrows.' (Verse 4.) 'All we,' says he, 'like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' (Verse 6.) All mankind have forsaken God, and placed their own will upon his throne, and so were liable to the highest punishment, when the Mediator voluntarily interposed himself between them and the just Judge. And the incomprehensible love of God, that he might spare them, 'spared not his own Son.' This is shown in those words: 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' It was on this account that 'He was oppressed and afflicted, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter;' (verse 7;) while God 'made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' (2 Cor. v. 21.) This is expressed in the ninth and tenth verses: 'He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him,' when he 'made his soul an offering for sin.' How exactly do his own words agree with these: 'I am the good Shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep!' (John x. 14, 15.) For them 'was he taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living.' (Isai. liii. 8.) How doth God herein 'commend his love towards' us, in 'delivering up his own Son to die for us!' Yea, God 'was pleased with bruising him,' when, clothed with our flesh, and bearing our sins, he manifested to angels and men his infinite love of divine justice, till, being 'made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' he satisfied its utmost demand.

"It was then God 'was pleased to bruise him,' when 'he made his soul an offering for sin.' He then appeared before the Judge of all, under 'the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,' as the Apostle speaks. And therefore God was pleased 'to condemn sin in the flesh;' (Rom. viii. 3, 4;) to 'bruise him' who sustained

the person of sinners. But this was only the prelude of a glorious victory. Therefore, the Prophet adds: 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' (Isai. liii. 10.) After repeating (verse 11) the sum of all, 'He shall bear their iniquities,' he subjoins the cause of his reward: 'Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; for he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' (Verse 12.)

"The fifth verse, of which I have not yet spoken, renders this great truth still more evident: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.' He loved his own body less than his mystical body, the Church, and therefore gave the former for the latter, 'to redeem and purchase it with his own blood,' by paying himself as a ransom for it. Hereby 'nailing the handwriting which was against us to his cross, he took it out of the way,' and so became 'our peace.'

"(4.) From all which it appears, that Christ was not only a pattern, but, first and principally, the surety of the new covenant, yea, a sacrifice and a victim for the sins of his people; 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' (Rom. iii. 25.) And that precious sacrifice offered on the cross is the very centre and marrow of the gospel. To that one offering whereby our great High Priest 'hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' (Heb. x. 14,) all the ancient sacrifices referred, as well as numberless other types and figures. 'All these,' says the Apostle, 'were shadows of things to come; but the body is Christ.' (Col. ii. 17.) He it was, who, 'not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, entered into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' (Heb. ix. 12.) In consequence of this we are accepted, 'through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.' (x. 10.) In all the ancient types and figures, 'without shedding of blood there was no remission;' which was intended to show, there never could be any without the blood of the great Antitype; without that grand propitiatory sacrifice, which (like the figure of it) was to be offered 'without the gate.'

"Indeed, the whole worship of the Old Testament teaches nothing else but the satisfaction made by the blood of Christ, and our reconciliation with God thereby: Hence he is styled,

'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;' with a view to the paschal lamb, and the other lambs that were offered in sacrifice: On which account the inhabitants of heaven likewise 'give glory, and sing a new song, because he hath redeemed' them 'unto God by his blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.' (Rev. v. 9.)

"(5.) To this might be added the numerous figures that occur in the lives of the old patriarchs, prophets, and kings. But it may suffice to add to the preceding only two testimonies more of the manner of our redemption by a proper sacrifice; the one that of St. Paul,—'Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;' (Gal. iii. 13;) the other of St. Peter,—'Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.' (1 Peter ii. 24.) From all this abundantly appears the substitution of the Messiah in the place of his people, thereby atoning for their sins, and restoring them to the favour of God.

"These are the points which are so vehemently opposed by Socinus and his followers, who rob Christ of the principal part of his priestly office, and leave him only that of interceding for us by prayer; as if any intercession were worthy of Christ, which had not his full satisfaction and propitiatory sacrifice for its foundation. Indeed these cannot be put asunder, as sufficiently appears from the words cited before,—'He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors;' where the Holy Ghost closely joins his intercession with his satisfaction made by sacrifice. These and a thousand other solid arguments that might be advanced in proof of this fundamental doctrine, overturn all the cavils that flow from corrupt reason, which indeed are weak and thin as a spider's web."

I have dwelt the longer on this head, because of its inexpressible moment. For whether or no the doctrine of justification by faith be, as all Protestants thought at the time of the Reformation, *articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesie*, "a doctrine without which there can be no Christian church;" most certainly there can be none where the whole notion of justification is ridiculed and exploded, unless it be such a Church as includes, according to your account, every child of man, of which, consequently, Turks, Deists, and Pagans are as real members as the most pious Christian under the

sun. I cannot but observe, that this is the very essence of Deism; no serious Infidel need contend for more. I would therefore no more set one of this opinion to convert Deists, than I would set a Turk to convert Mahometans.

4. As every one that is justified is born of God, I am naturally led to consider, in the next place, (so far as it is delivered in the tracts now before us,) your doctrine of the new birth.

“In the day that Adam ate of the tree, he died; that is, his heavenly spirit, with its heavenly body, were extinguished. To make that heavenly spirit and body to be alive again in man, this is regeneration.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 9.) O no; this is not; nor anything like it. This is the unscriptural dream of Behmen’s heated imagination.

“See the true reason why only the Son of God could be our Redeemer. It is because he alone could be able to bring to life again that celestial spirit and body which had died in Adam.” (*Ibid.*)

Not so; but he alone could be our Redeemer, because he alone, “by that one oblation of himself once offered” could make “a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”

“See also why a man must ‘be born again of water and of the Spirit.’ He must be born again of the Spirit, because Adam’s heavenly spirit was lost.” (*Ibid.*) Nay, but because Adam had lost the inward image of God, wherein he was created. And no less than the almighty Spirit of God could renew that image in his soul.

“He must be born of water, because that heavenly body which Adam lost was formed out of the heavenly materiality, which is called water.” (*Ibid.*)

Vain philosophy! The plain meaning of the expression, “Except a man be born of water,” is neither more nor less than this, “Except he be baptized.” And the plain reason why he ought to be thus born of water is, because God hath appointed it. He hath appointed it as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, which grace is, “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”

“The necessity of our regaining our first heavenly body is the necessity” (I presume you mean, the ground of the necessity) “of our eating the body and blood of Christ.” (Page 10.)

Neither can I believe this, till I find it in the Bible. I am there taught to believe, that our “spiritually receiving the body

and blood of Christ," which is most eminently done in the Lord's supper, is necessary to "strengthen and refresh our souls, as our bodies are by the bread and wine."

"The necessity of having again our first heavenly spirit is shown by the necessity of our being baptized with the Holy Ghost!" (*Ibid.*)

No. That we "must be baptized with the Holy Ghost," implies this and no more, that we cannot be "renewed in righteousness and true holiness" any otherwise than by being over-shadowed, quickened, and animated by that blessed Spirit.

"Our fall is nothing else but the falling of our soul from its heavenly body and spirit, into a bestial body and spirit. Our redemption" (you mean, our new birth) "is nothing else but the regaining our first angelic spirit and body." (*Ibid.*)

What an account is here of the Christian redemption! How would Dr. Tindal have smiled at this! Where you say, "Redemption is nothing else but the life of God in the soul," you allow an essential part of it. But here you allow it to be nothing else but that which is no part of it at all; nothing else but a whim, a madman's dream, a chimera, a mere non-entity!

"This," (angelic spirit and body,) "in Scripture, is called our 'new' or 'inward man.'" (*Ibid.*)

The "inward man" in Scripture means one thing, the "new man" another. The former means, the mind, opposed to the body: "Though our outward man," our body, "perish, yet the inward man," the mind or soul, "is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. iv. 16.) The latter means, universal holiness. "Put off the old man, which is corrupt; and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 22, 24.) But neither does the one nor the other ever mean "this angelic spirit and body."

You yourself know better what the new birth is. You describe it better, though still with amazing queerness of language, where you say,—

"Man hath the light and water of an outward nature to quench the wrath of his own life, and the light and meekness of Christ, as a seed born in him, to bring forth anew the image of God."

But it is not strange, that you speak so confusedly and darkly, as you generally do, of the new birth, seeing you seem to have no conception of that faith whereby we are born again.

This abundantly appears from your frank declaration, "We are neither saved by faith, nor by works." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 36.) Flatly contrary to the declaration of St. Paul, "By grace we are saved through faith."

To put the matter out of dispute, you declare that you mean by faith, "a desire to be one with Christ." (Part I., p. 50.)

Again: "The desire of turning to God is the coming of Christ into the soul. This faith will save thee." (Page 76.)

So, in your judgment, saving faith is, "a desire of coming to God, or of being one with Christ." I know the contrary from experience. I had this desire many years before I even knew what saving faith was.

Faith is so far from being only this desire, that it is no desire at all. It differs from all desire *toto genere*, although doubtless all good desires accompany it. It is, according to St. Paul, an ~~evidens~~ an "evidence" or "conviction" (which is totally different from a desire) "of things not seen," a supernatural, a divine evidence and conviction of the things which God hath revealed in his word; of this in particular, that the Son of God hath loved me and given himself for me. Whosoever hath this faith is born of God. Whosoever thus believeth is saved; and if he endure therein to the end, shall be saved everlastingly.

The process of this work in the soul, of the present salvation which is through faith, you likewise describe confusedly and obscurely. The sum of what you say is this:—

"The perfect sense of what you are, kindled into a working state of sensibility by the light of God, is the light and fire from whence the spirit of prayer proceeds. In its first kindling, nothing is found but pain, wrath, and darkness: And therefore its first prayer is all humility." (Part II., p. 172.)

Would it not be more intelligible if one had said, "The convincing Spirit of God gives you to see and feel that you are a poor undone, guilty, helpless sinner: At the same time, he incites you to cry for help to Him who is 'mighty to save?'" This is true. But it is not true, that, in the first kindling of this fire, in plain terms, during the first convictions, "nothing is found but pain, wrath, and darkness." Very often there are found even in the first conviction, sweet gleams of light, touches of joy, of hope, and of love, mixed with sorrow and fear. Much less is it true, that the first prayer of an awakening sinner is all humility. (*Ibid.*) On the contrary, a sinner newly awakened

has always more or less confidence in himself, in what he is, or has, or does, and will do; which is not humility, but downright pride. And this mingles itself with all his prayer, till the day-star is just rising in his heart.

You add: "This prayer is met by the divine love, and changed into hymns, and songs, and thanksgivings." (*Ibid.*) It is so, when "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "This state of fervour melts away all earthly passions and affections, and leaves no inclination in the soul, but to delight in God alone." (*Ibid.*) It is certain, this is the genuine effect of "the love of God shed abroad in the heart;" which expression of St. Paul, I suppose, means the same with "this state of fervour." "Then its prayer changes again, and continually stands in fulness of faith, in purity of love, in absolute resignation to do and be what and how his Beloved pleaseth. This is the last state of the spirit of prayer, and is our highest union with God in this life." (Page 173.)

Assuredly it is: Fulness of faith, beholding, with open face, the glory of the Lord; purity of love, free from all mixture of its contrary, yielding the whole heart to God; absolute resignation, excluding every degree of self-will, sacrificing every thought, word, and work to God. But do we change directly, from our first love, into the highest union with God? Surely not. There is an intermediate state between that of "babes in Christ," and that of fathers. You yourself are very sensible there is, although you here speak as if there were not.

You go on: "People who have long dwelt in this fervour are frightened when coldness seizes upon them;" (page 174;) that is, when they lose it, when their love grows cold. And certainly, well they may, if this fervour was to bring them to "fulness of faith, purity of love, and absolute resignation." Well they may be affrighted, if that fervour be lost before "it has done its work."

Indeed, they might be affrighted when it is not lost, if that which follows be true: "Fervour is good, and ought to be loved; but distress and coldness are better. It brings the soul nearer to God than the fervour did." (Pages 175, 176.)

The fervour, you said, brought the soul to "its highest union with God in this life." Can coldness do more? Can it bring us to an union higher than the highest?

To explain this, you say, "The fervour made the soul delight in God. But it was too much an own delight. It was a fancied self-holiness, and occasioned rest and satisfaction in itself, in a spiritual self." (Page 175.) Either fervour does bring us to purity of love, and absolute resignation, or not. To say it does not, contradicts what you said before: To say, it does, contradicts what you say now. For if it does, we cannot say, "Coldness does the work which fervour did in a higher degree."

I should not insist so long on these glaring inconsistencies, were not the doctrine you are here labouring to support absolutely inconsistent with that of St. Paul, and naturally productive of the most fatal consequences. St. Paul asserts, the present kingdom of God in the soul is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He continually teaches, that these, which God hath joined, man ought not to put asunder; that peace and joy should never be separated from righteousness, being the divine means both of preserving and increasing it; and that we may, yea, ought, to rejoice evermore, till the God of peace sanctifies us wholly. But if these things are so, then "distress and coldness are" not "better" than fervent love, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Again: The doctrine, that it is better and more profitable for the soul to lose its sense of the love of God than to keep it, is not only unscriptural, but naturally attended with the most fatal consequences. It directly tends to obstruct, if not destroy, the work of God in the heart, by causing men to bless themselves in those ways which damp the fervour of their affections; and to imagine they are considerably advanced in grace, when they have grieved, yea, quenched, the Spirit. Nay, but let all who now feel the love of God in their hearts, and "walk in the light as he is in the light," labour, by every possible means, to "keep themselves in the love of God." Let them be ever "fervent in spirit;" let them "rejoice evermore," and stir up the gift of God which is in them. And if, at any time, "coldness seizes upon them," let them be assured, they have grieved the Spirit of God. Let them be affrighted; let them fear lest they sink lower and lower; yea, into total deadness and hardness of heart. At the peril of their souls, let them not rest in darkness, but examine themselves, search out their spirits, cry vehemently to God, and not cease till he restores the light of his countenance.

5. If this doctrine of the profitableness of coldness above fervour directly tends to make believers easy, while they are sliding back into unbelief, you have another which tends as directly to make them easy who never believed at all; I mean, that of Christ in every man. What you advance on this head, I desire next to consider, as the importance of it requires.

“The birth of Christ is already begun in every one. Jesus is already within thee, (whoever thou art,) living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 55.)

“Every man has Christ in his spirit, lying there as in a state of insensibility and death.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 34.)

But he is living, for all that. And though “in a state of insensibility,” he is “stirring, calling, knocking at the door of the heart!”

“Something of heaven” (you use this phrase as equivalent with Christ) “lies, in every soul, in a state of inactivity and death.” (Page 35.)

“All the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ lie hid as a seed in thy soul.” (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 68.)

But are they active or inactive? living and stirring, or in a state of insensibility and death?

“Thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, while all the peace and joy of God are within thee.” (Page 74.)

This is most wonderful of all! Are these within him who is “dead in sin,” who is a “stranger to all that is holy and heavenly?” If they are, how can he be miserable, who has “all the peace and joy of God within him?” Will you say, “They are in him, but he does not feel them?” Nay, then, they are not in him. I have peace in me no longer than I feel peace; I feel joy, or I have it not.

“See here the extent of the Catholic Church of Christ! It takes in all the world.” (Page 56.)

So Jews, Mahometans, Deists, Heathens, are all members of the Church of Christ! Should we not add devils too, seeing these also are to dwell with us in heaven?

“Poor sinner, Christ dwelleth in the centre, the fund or bottom, of thy soul.” (Page 59.)

What is this? What is either the centre, the top, or bottom of a spirit?

“When Adam fell, this centre of his soul became a prisoner

in an earthly animal. But from the moment God spoke Christ into Adam, all the treasures of the divine nature, the light and Spirit of God, came again into man, into the centre of his soul." (Page 60.)

I cannot find in the Bible when that was, when "God spoke Christ into Adam."

We come now to the proofs of these strong assertions:—

And, (1.) "No faith could ever begin, unless every man had Christ in him." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 34.)

This proposition needs just as much proof itself, as that which it is brought to prove.

(2.) "Unless the remains of the perfect love of God were in every man, it would be impossible he should ever love God at all." (Page 38.)

Why so? Cannot God give his love this moment to one who never loved him before?

(3.) "Unless Christ was hidden in the soul, there could not be the least beginning of man's salvation. For what could begin to desire heaven, unless something of heaven was hid in the soul?" (Page 35.)

What could? Why, any soul which had nothing but hell in it before, the moment grace was infused from above.

(4.) "The Ten Commandments lay hid in men's souls," (how?) "till called into sensibility by writing them on stone. Just so Christ lies in the soul, till awakened by the mediatorial office of the holy Jesus." (Page 37.)

This is only assertion still, not proof. But what do you mean by the mediatorial office of Christ? And how is Christ "awakened by the mediatorial office of the holy Jesus?"

(5.) "The sea cannot be moved by any other wind than that which had its birth from the sea itself." (Page 40.)

I think it can. I have seen it "moved by a wind which had its birth from the" land.

(6.) "The musician cannot make his instrument give any other melody than that which lies hid in it, as its own inward state." (Page 42.)

Did the tune, then, lie hid in the trumpet, before the trumpeter blew? And was this tune, or another, or all that ever were and will be played on it, the inward state of the trumpet?

"No more can the mind have any grief or joy but that which is from itself." (Page 43.)

An unhappy comparison! For the instrument can have no melody or sound at all from itself; and most unhappily applied to the operations of God upon the souls of men. For has God no more power over my soul, than I have over a musical instrument?

These are your arguments to prove that Christ is in every man: A blessing which St. Paul thought was peculiar to believers. He said, "Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates," unbelievers. You say, Christ is in you, whether ye be reprobates or no. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," saith the Apostle. Yea, but "every man," saith Mr. Law, "hath the Spirit of God. The Spirit of Christ is in every soul." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 63.) "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life," saith St. John. But Mr. Law saith, "Every man hath the Son of God." Sleep on, then, ye sons of Belial, and take your rest; ye are all safe; for "he that hath the Son hath life."

There can hardly be any doctrine under heaven more agreeable to flesh and blood; nor any which more directly tends to prevent the very dawn of conviction, or, at least, to hinder its deepening in the soul, and coming to a sound issue. None more naturally tends to keep men asleep in sin, and to lull asleep those who begin to be awakened. Only persuade one of this, "Christ is already in thy heart; thou hast now the inspiration of his Spirit; all the peace and joy of God are within thee, yea, all the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ;" and you need do no more; the siren song quiets all his sorrow and fear. As soon as you have sewed this pillow to his soul, he sinks back into the sleep of death.

6. But you have made an ample amends for this, by providing so short and easy a way to heaven; not a long, narrow, troublesome, round-about path, like that described in the Bible; but one that will as compendiously save the soul, as Dr. Ward's "pill and drop" heal the body: A way so plain, that they who follow it need no Bible, no human teaching, no outward means whatever; being every one able to stand alone, every one sufficient for himself!

"The first step is, to turn wholly from yourself, and to give up yourself wholly unto God." (Part II., p. 22.)

If it be, no flesh living shall be saved. How grievously do we stumble at the threshold! Do you seriously call this *the first*

step,—to turn wholly from myself, and give up myself wholly unto God? Am I then to step first on the highest round of the ladder? Not unless you turn it upside down. The way to heaven would be short indeed, if the first and the last step were all one; if we were to step as far the moment we set out, as we can do till we enter into glory.

But what do you mean by giving up myself to God? You answer: "Every sincere wish and desire after Christian virtues, is giving up yourself to him, and the very perfection of faith." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 217.)

Far, very far from it: I know from the experience of a thousand persons, as well as from Scripture, and the very reason of the thing, that a man may have sincere desires after all these, long before he attains them. He may sincerely wish to give himself up to God, long before he is able so to do. He may desire this, not only before he has the perfection, but before he has any degree, of saving faith.

More marvellous still is that which follows: "You may easily and immediately, by the mere turning of your mind, have all these virtues,—patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God." (Page 212.)

Who may? Not I; not you; not any that is born of a woman; as is proved by the daily experience of all that know what patience, meekness, or resignation means.

But how shall I know whether I have faith or not? "I will give you an infallible touchstone. Retire from all conversation only for a month. Neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself. Stop all the former workings of your heart and mind, and stand all this month in prayer to God. If your heart cannot give itself up in this manner to prayer, be fully assured you are an infidel." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 163.)

If this be so, the infidels are a goodly company! if every man be of that number who cannot "stop all the former workings of his heart and mind, and stand thus in prayer to God for a month together."

But I would gladly know by what authority you give us this touchstone; and how you prove it to be infallible. I read nothing like it in the oracles of God. I cannot find one word there of "refraining from all conversation, from writing, and reading, for a month." (I fear you make no exception in favour of public worship or reading the word of God.) Where does

the Bible speak of this? of stopping for a month, or a day, all the former workings of my heart and mind? of refraining from all converse with the children of God, and from reading his word? It would be no wonder, should any man make this unscriptural (if not anti-scriptural) experiment, if Satan were permitted to work in him "a strong delusion," so that he should "believe a lie."

Nearly related to this touchstone is the direction which you give elsewhere: "Stop all self-activity; be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to the inward light." (Part I., pp. 77, 82.)

But beware "the light which is in thee be not darkness;" as it surely is, if it agree not with "the law and the testimony." "Open thy heart to all its impressions," if they agree with that truly infallible touchstone. Otherwise regard no impression of any kind, at the peril of thy soul,—"wholly stopping the workings of thy own reason and judgment." I find no such advice in the word of God. And I fear they who stop the workings of their reason, lie the more open to the workings of their imagination.

There is abundantly greater danger of this when we fancy we have no longer need to "be taught of man." To this your late writings directly lead. One who admires them will be very apt to cry out, "I have found all that I need know of God, of Christ, of myself, of heaven, of hell, of sin, of grace, and of salvation." (Part II., p. 4.) And the rather, because you yourself affirm roundly, "When once we apprehend the all of God, and our own nothingness," (which a man may persuade himself he does, in less than four-and-twenty hours,) "it brings a kind of infallibility into the soul in which it dwells; all that is vain, and false, and deceitful, is forced to vanish and fly before it." (Part I., p. 95.) Agreeably to which, you tell your convert, "You have no questions to ask of any body." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 218.) And if, notwithstanding this, he will ask, "But how am I to keep up the flame of love?" you answer, "I wonder you should want to know this. Does a blind, or sick, or lame man want to know how he should desire sight, health, or limbs?" (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 165.) No; but he wants to know how he should attain, and how he should keep, them. And he who has attained the love of God, may still want to know how he shall keep it. And he may still inquire, "May I

not take my own passions, or the suggestions of evil spirits, for the workings of the Spirit of God?" (Page 198.) To this you answer, "Every man knows when he is governed by the spirit of wrath, envy, or covetousness, as easily and as certainly as he knows when he is hungry." (*Ibid.*) Indeed he does not; neither as easily nor as certainly. Without great care, he may take wrath to be pious zeal, envy to be virtuous emulation, and covetousness to be Christian prudence and laudable frugality. "Now, the knowledge of the Spirit of God in yourself is as perceptible as covetousness." Perhaps so; for this is as difficultly perceptible as any temper of the human soul. "And liable to no more delusion." Indeed it need not; for this is liable to ten thousand delusions.

You add: "His spirit is more distinguishable from all other spirits, than any of your natural affections are from one another." (Page 199.) Suppose joy and grief: Is it more distinguishable from all other spirits, than these are from one another? Did any man ever mistake grief for joy? No, not from the beginning of the world. But did none ever mistake nature for grace? Who will be so hardy as to affirm this?

But you set your pupil as much above the being taught by books, as being taught by men. "Seek," say you, "for help no other way, neither from men, nor books; but wholly leave yourself to God." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 225.)

But how can a man "leave himself wholly to God," in the total neglect of his ordinances? The old Bible way is, to "leave ourselves wholly to God," in the constant use of all the means he hath ordained. And I cannot yet think the new is better, though you are fully persuaded it is. "There are two ways," you say, "of attaining goodness and virtue; the one by books or the ministry of men, the other by an inward birth. The former is only in order to the latter." This is most true, that all the externals of religion are in order to the renewal of our soul in righteousness and true holiness. But it is not true, that the external way is one, and the internal way another. There is but one scriptural way, wherein we receive inward grace, through the outward means which God hath appointed.

Some might think that when you advised, "not to seek help from books," you did not include the Bible. But you clear up this, where you answer the objection, of your not esteeming the Bible enough. You say, "How could you more magnify John

the Baptist, than by going from his teaching, to be taught by that Christ to whom he directed you? Now, the Bible can have no other office or power, than to direct you to Christ. How then can you more magnify the Bible than by going from its teaching, to be taught by Christ?" So you set Christ and the Bible in flat opposition to each other! And is this the way we are to learn of him? Nay, but we are taught of him, not by going from the Bible, but by keeping close to it. Both by the Bible and by experience we know, that his word and his Spirit act in connexion with each other. And thus it is, that by Christ continually teaching and strengthening him through the Scripture, "the man of God is made perfect, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work."

According to your veneration for the Bible, is your regard for public worship and for the Lord's supper. "Christ," you say, "is the Church or temple of God within thee. There the supper of the Lamb is kept. When thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee; and wherever thou goest, thou wilt have a Priest, a church, and an altar along with thee." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 73.)

The plain inference is, Thou wilt not need to make any difference between Sunday and other days. Thou wilt need no other church than that which thou hast always along with thee; no other supper, worship, Priest, or altar. Be well grounded in this inward worship, and it supersedes all the rest.

This is right pleasing to flesh and blood; and I could most easily believe it, if I did not believe the Bible. But that teaches me inwardly to worship God, as at all times and in all places, so particularly on his own day, in the congregation of his people, at his altar, and by the ministry of those his servants whom he hath given for this very thing, "for the perfecting of the saints," and with whom he will be to the end of the world.

Extremely dangerous therefore is this other gospel, which leads quite wide of the gospel of Christ. And what must the consequence be, if we thus "break," yea, "and teach men so," not "one" only, neither "the least," of "his commandments?" Even that we "shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." God grant this may not fall on you or me!

7. However, whether we have a place in heaven or not, you are very sure we shall have none in hell. For there is no hell

in *rerum naturâ*, "no such place in the universe." You declare this over and over again, in great variety of expressions. It may suffice to mention two or three: "Hell is no penalty prepared or inflicted by God." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., p. 33.) "Damnation is only that which springs up within you." (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 47.) "Hell and damnation are nothing but the various operations of self." (*Spirit of Prayer*, Part I., p. 79.)

I rather incline to the account published a few years ago, by a wise and pious man, (the late Bishop of Cork,) where he is speaking of the improvement of human knowledge by revelation. Some of his words are: "Concerning future punishments, we learn from revelation only, (1.) That they are both for soul and body, which are distinguished in Scripture by 'the worm that dieth not,' and 'the fire which never shall be quenched:'. And accordingly we are bid to 'fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' Upon which I shall only remark, that whereas we find by experience, the body and soul in this life are not capable of suffering the extremity of pain and anguish at the same time, insomuch that the greatest anguish of mind is lost and diverted by acute and pungent pain of body; yet we learn from Scripture, that in hell the wicked will be subject to extreme torments of both together." (*Procedure, &c., of Human Understanding*, p. 350.)

"(2.) That the chief cause of their eternal misery will be an eternal exclusion from the beatific vision of God. This exclusion seems to be the only punishment to which we can now conceive a pure spirit liable. And according as all intelligent beings are at a less or greater distance from this fountain of all happiness, so they are necessarily more or less miserable or happy.

"(3.) That one part of those punishments will be by fire, than which we have not any revelation more express and positive. And as it is an instance of great goodness in God, that the joys of heaven are represented to us under the figurative images of light and glory and a kingdom, and that the substance shall exceed the utmost of our conception; so it is an argument of his strict justice, that future punishments are more literally threatened and foretold.

"(4.) The eternity of these punishments is revealed as plainly as words can express it. And the difficulty of that question, 'What proportion endless torments can bear to momentary

sin,' is quite removed by considering, that the punishments denounced are not sanctions entirely arbitrary, but are withal so many previous warnings or declarations of the natural tendency of sin itself. So that an unrepenting sinner must be miserable in another life by a necessity of nature. Therefore he is not capable of mercy; since there never can be an alteration of his condition, without such a change of the whole man as would put the natural and settled order of the creation out of course." (Page 351.)

Doubtless this eminent man (whose books on the Human Understanding, and on Divine Analogy, I would earnestly recommend to all who either in whole or in part deny the Christian Revelation) grounded his judgment both of the nature and duration of future punishments on these and the like passages of Scripture:—

"If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God! For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 26–31.)

And let not any who live and die in their sins, vainly hope to escape his vengeance. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Peter ii. 4–9.) In that day, peculiarly styled, "the day of the Lord," they "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt." (Dan. xii. 2.) Among the latter will all those be found, who are now, by their obstinate impenitence, "treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will" then render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." (Rom. ii. 5–9.) He hath declared the very sentence which he will then pronounce on all the workers of iniquity: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.) And in that

hour it will be executed ; being “ cast into outer darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth,” (verse 30,) they “ will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Thess. i. 9.) A punishment not only without end, but likewise without intermission. For when once “ they are cast into that furnace of fire,” that “ lake of fire burning with brimstone, the worm,” gnawing their soul, “ dieth not, and the fire,” tormenting their body, “ is not quenched.” So that “ they have no rest day or night ; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.”

Now, thus much cannot be denied, that these texts speak as if there were really such a place as hell, as if there were a real fire there, and as if it would remain for ever. I would then ask but one plain question : If the case is not so, why did God speak as if it was ? Say you, “ To affright men from sin ? ” What, by guile, by dissimulation, by hanging out false colours ? Can you possibly ascribe this to the God of truth ? Can you believe it of Him ? Can you conceive the Most High dressing up a scarecrow, as we do to fright children ? Far be it from him ! If there be then any such fraud in the Bible, the Bible is not of God. And indeed this must be the result of all : If there be “ no unquenchable fire, no everlasting burnings,” there is no dependence on those writings wherein they are so expressly asserted, nor of the eternity of heaven, any more than of hell. So that if we give up the one, we must give up the other. No hell, no heaven, no revelation !

In vain you strive to supply the place of this, by putting purgatory in its room ; by saying, “ These virtues must have their perfect work in you, if not before, yet cert inly after, death. Everything else must be taken from you by fire, either here or hereafter.” (*Spirit of Love*, Part II., p. 232.) Poor, broken reed ! Nothing will “ be taken from you ” by that fire which is “ prepared for the devil and his angels,” but all rest, all joy, all comfort, all hope. For “ the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

I have now, Sir, delivered my own soul. And I have used great plainness of speech ; such as I could not have prevailed on myself to use to one whom I so much respect, on any other occasion.

O that your latter Works may be more and greater than your first ! Surely they would, if you could ever be persuaded to

study, instead of the writings of Tauler and Behmen, those of St. Paul, James, Peter, and John; to spew out of your mouth and out of your heart that vain philosophy, and speak neither higher nor lower things, neither more nor less, than the oracles of God; to renounce, despise, abhor all the high-flown bombast, all the unintelligible jargon of the Mystics, and come back to the plain religion of the Bible, "We love him, because he first loved us."

LONDON,
January 6, 1756.

THOUGHTS UPON JACOB BEHMEN.

I HAVE considered the Memoirs of Jacob Behmen, of which I will speak very freely.

I believe he was a good man. But I see nothing extraordinary either in his life or in his death. I have known many, both men and women, who were far more exemplary in their lives, and far more honoured of God in their death.

I allow he wrote many truths; but none that would have appeared at all extraordinary, had he thrown aside his hard words, and used plain and common language.

What some seem most to admire in his writings, is what I most object to; I mean his philosophy and his phraseology. These are really his own; and these are quite new; therefore, they are quite wrong.

I totally object to his blending religion with philosophy; and as vain a philosophy as ever existed: Crude, indigested; supported neither by Scripture nor reason, nor anything but his own *ipse dixit*.

I grant, Mr. Law, by taking immense pains, has licked it into some shape. And he has made it hang tolerably together. But still it admits of no manner of proof.