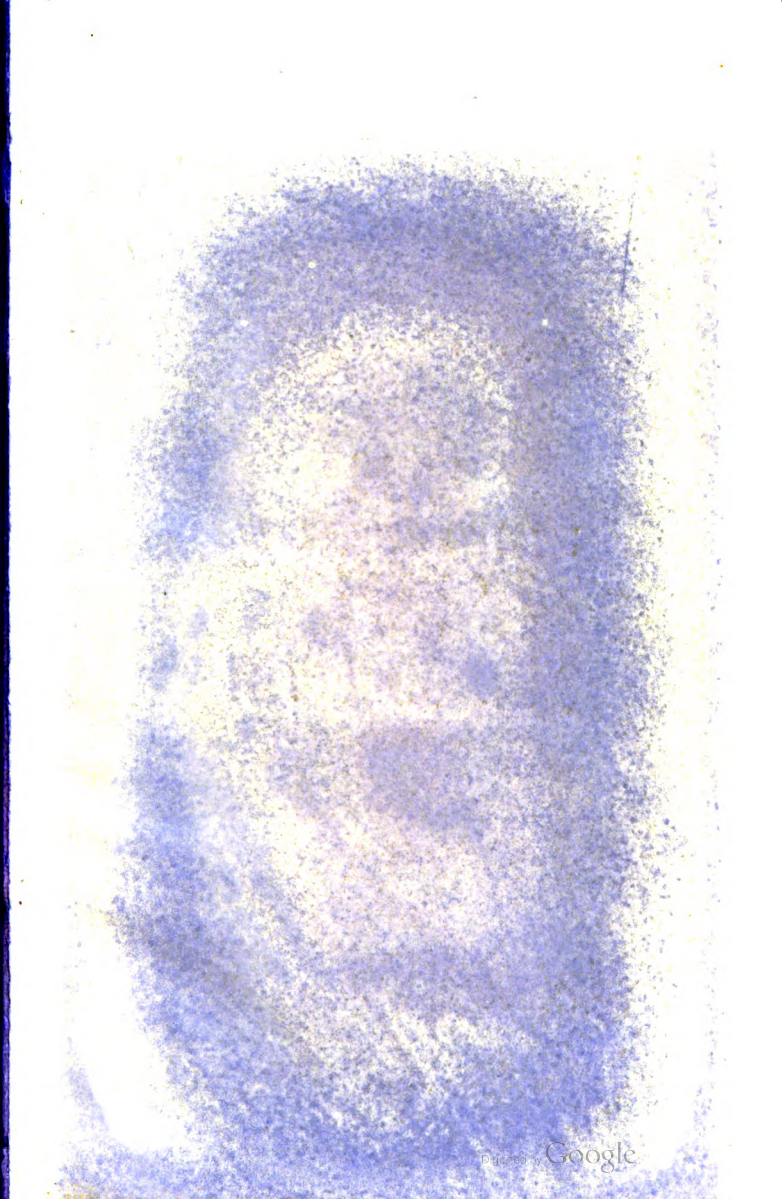


PURE
EVANGELICAL RELIGION
RESTORED
BY THE
REV. J. CLOWES.



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A BOOK FOR THE TIMES.

PURE
EVANGELICAL RELIGION
RESTORED;
OR,
CHARITY, FAITH, AND GOOD WORKS
RE-UNITED,
AND TRIUMPHING OVER ALL THE
SELFISHNESS, WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS, INFIDELITY, BIGOTRY,
SUPERSTITION, FANATICISM,
AND OVER EVERY OTHER CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE,
BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
HEAVENLY KINGDOM OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
IN THE HUMAN BOSOM.
A TRUE HISTORY.

BY
THE REV. J. CLOWES, M.A.

LATE RECTOR OF ST. JOHN'S, MANCHESTER, AND FELLOW OF
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Third Edition.

LONDON:
HODSON AND SON, PORTUGAL STREET, LINCOLN'S INN.
MANCHESTER:
BOTTOMLEY, SON, AND TOLLEY, 10, MARKET STREET.
1861.

**MANCHESTER: CAVE AND SEVER, PRINTERS BY STEAM POWER,
PALATINE BUILDINGS, HUNT'S BANK.**



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following little work was written many years ago by the late Rev. JOHN CLOWES, Rector of St. John's, Manchester. It has been reprinted from the edition of 1811. In Chapter VII. is a record of the Author's appearance before Dr. PORTEOUS, the Bishop of Chester; before whom he was cited to give an account of various charges alleged against him by certain persons in Manchester, on the ground of his theological sentiments. This interview with the Bishop is supposed to have taken place about the year 1792. The Sage, so often alluded to in the work, was SWEDENBORG.

As this little Book appears to be especially adapted to the present times, when the Theological world is so much agitated with conflicting opinions, it has been thought by the Editors to be especially suited to the present period, and, therefore, they have called it A BOOK FOR THE TIMES.

P R E F A C E .

HISTORY, it is well known, is in many cases little else than a record of the operation of the bad passions of mankind, seeking their gratification in the overthrow and destruction of all that order, harmony, and peace, which a merciful God is ever desirous to establish amongst His creatures here on earth.

The following history is an exception to the above rule, being intended to develop and describe the operation of those higher principles of the human mind, which descending from the Most High, by the revelation of His eternal Truth, have a tendency to elevate man to his Maker, to dignify his otherwise degraded nature, to give him power over his corruptions, to renew in him the Divine image and likeness, and finally to qualify him for admission into the kingdom of beatified spirits, there to live for ever in the enjoyment of a bliss, as pure as it is permanent, as transcendent as it is inconceivable.

Let the reader, however, be upon his guard as to the spirit and temper of mind, in which he peruses the pages of this singular volume, lest by perverting its meaning, he should make it an instrument of mischief to himself. Let him remember, therefore, that

what is herein written is not intended either to amuse the frivolous with its gaieties, or to fill the cups of the voluptuous with its enchantments, or to gratify the pride of learning with its deep and critical researches, or to advocate the cause of modern theology, by supporting its opinions, its commentaries, and its creeds.

Should any ask, what then is the object and design of the following pages? It is answered, to establish the true Christian in the purity and simplicity of Evangelical Faith and Life; to detect some of the leading errors, which tend at this day to divide and desolate the Christian church; to point out the only effectual security against those errors in the bright and genuine Light of revealed Truth; and lastly, to encourage all to walk in that light by a consolatory prospect of that glorious and renewed state of the earth, predicted in the Word of ancient prophecy, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.)

Let then the careless and inconsiderate, who are not disposed to discover their duty, and the impenitent and profligate, who may have discovered, but are not willing to practise it; let the learned, who mistake science for wisdom, and the theologians, who measure piety by assent to articles of faith; be alike cautioned against the perusal of a book, which will but add to their condemnation, so long as they are determined to continue in their respective states of carelessness and impenitence, of useless erudition and mere creed-worship. But let

the humble Christian, who is desirous both to know his God and to serve Him, and whose religion consists in praying and labouring earnestly to be delivered from his natural evils by the recovery of a godlike mind and life, approach, read, and digest well the contents of the following work. Let him believe that it was written solely for his edification, since (if the author knows his own heart) he had no other view in composing it, than to make the way to heaven plain to those who in sincerity are seeking it; and to convince all travellers to the blessed kingdom, that they cannot possibly mistake their way, provided they set our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word always before their eyes, and endeavour to follow that Great Redeeming God, by walking in the blessed steps of humility, repentance, self-denial, charity, faith, and good works, in which He has been pleased to go before them.

That the following record may be sanctified to the accomplishment of these good purposes, for which it was intended, is the devout prayer of the author.

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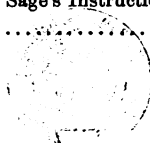
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PURE EVANGELICAL RELIGION RESTORED, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Shewing the mischievous Effects of the Separation of Charity, Faith, and Good Works, as manifested in a Great Kingdom.

IT happened on a certain time, in a great northern kingdom, celebrated alike for the extent of its dominion, for its wealth, for its refinement, and for the genius of its inhabitants, that a very bitter and violent dispute was excited amongst the people, respecting charity, faith, and good works, as to the comparative efficacy of each in promoting the justification and final salvation of mankind. Some contended on the occasion, and with much earnestness, that *charity* had the pre-eminence, and that faith and good works ought to be regarded, not as necessary, but merely as accessory and instrumental graces in producing saving effects. Others again insisted, and with equal zeal, that *faith alone* is the virtue which reconciles man to his God, and qualifies him for admission into the divine favour, and for a participation of the eternal recompence of the righteous. Others, lastly, argued that charity and faith are volatile, abstract, and unfixed principles without *good works*, and that, consequently, these latter ought to be exalted to a supreme place in the scale of justifying and saving excellencies.

During the progress of this dispute it was observed that the influence of true religion proportionably abated, and that the more men's minds were agitated by the

spirit of contention about the above evangelical principles, so much the less disposed were they to submit to the guidance and control of any of them. For the favourers of the pre-eminence of charity, to the exclusion of faith and good works, grew by degrees cold and careless, as might be expected, both about the creed which was to inform and direct their understandings, and also about the law of action which was to govern and guide their practice. The partisans of faith, in like manner, zealous only about the form of their creed, lost sight of the spirit of love and charity which was to give it life, and became equally blind to the necessity of those works or operations which were to give it effect. The same was true of the partisans of good works, who, banishing from their practice both charity and faith, and being content to do the work, without considering from what principle and persuasion it was done, retained nothing in their operations but a mere dead carcase of ceremonious and meritorious observances.

It was an additional mischief, on this occasion, that the minds of some of the clergy were inflamed and agitated by the dispute, and this to such a degree, that their discourses from the pulpit might rather be called controversial harangues, than sound and sober exhortations to the purity of the evangelical doctrine of life. Accordingly, some of them insisted that if a man's *intention* was right, it was needless for him to be concerned about the persuasions of faith which guided his understanding, or the performance of works which formed his practice. Some again contended, that faith alone being the one thing needful, their hearers had only to cherish the implantation of such a faith, and that if they could attain it, even at the hour of death, so as to have a full reliance at that time on the merits and atoning blood of the Redeemer, they would be as much justified as St. Paul, or any other of the apostles. Others, lastly, were loud and urgent in favour of good works, leading their congregations to depend for salvation, not so much on any thing which God had done for them, as on their

own doings, and insisting vehemently that in the great day of retribution the principal enquiry would be, who had been most liberal in the distribution of alms, in clothing the poor, and in building hospitals. Thus the great evangelical doctrines of repentance, of purification, of conversion to God, and of regeneration, were no longer heard in the churches, and the terrible consequence was, that the fallible traditions of men being substituted in place of the eternal counsels of the Most High, the people were rather amused than edified, rather perplexed than instructed, rather tantalized than satisfied, whilst, instead of the nourishing bread and wine of eternal life, they had nothing given them to feed upon but the spare and meagre diet of speculative opinions and sectarian prejudices.

In the meantime, the sentiments which flowed from the pulpit, as is always the case, found their way into the forum, into the habitations, into the employments and concerns of all who heard them, and spread infection accordingly. For when the minds of men are unsettled on the subject of religious principles, they are generally unsettled on every other subject, and in such case it is in vain to expect anything solid and fixed either in their morality, their manners, their education, or their public and private conduct. Accordingly, this people had very lax and indefinite ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, of justice and injustice, in their intercourse with each other. For being confused in their notions of saving knowledge, they found it more gratifying to close the interiors of the mind against the light of the eternal truth, than to open them to the discoveries of its reality and brightness. By degrees, therefore, they contracted an indisposition to think seriously, and this indisposition introduced a general want of principle and a general carelessness of thought into all their occupations. Their priests were accordingly worldly-minded, influenced more by the love of temporal reputation and gain, than by the love of God, and zeal for the salvation of souls. Their statesmen depended on their

own self-derived wisdom and political skill, more than on the over-ruling aid and counsels of the Divine Providence. Their men of scientific pursuits separated science from its heavenly origin, and by so doing rendered it the fatal instrument of pride and self-exaltation, instead of applying it as the means of their own purification in leading them to see and exalt the glory of God above human glory. Their merchants were cunning and artful; their mechanics dissolute; and the general mass of the people corrupt, sensual, and selfish. Yet they still preserved the external forms of religion and decorum, and were even distinguished, above other nations, by the splendour and parade of their public charities, because, judging externally themselves, they imagined that God judged externally also, and that He therefore would be pleased with the service of their lips, and the prodigality of their benevolence, without any regard to the purity of their intentions and the sincerity of their hearts.

But of all the features of corruption and blindness which distinguished this people, and which resulted from their carelessness of thought, there was none more remarkable, yet none more lamentable, than their apprehension of the Divine Being, and of the mode of His existence and operation. For finding in the Records of the eternal truth, which had been handed down to them from their ancestors, and which they occasionally consulted, that this Being is presented to view under the three distinct names and characters of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that the three distinct operations of *creation*, *redemption*, and *sanctification* are ascribed to Him, some of them fell into the gross idea that in the unity of this Divine Being there are three several and distinct *Persons* (a term never once mentioned, or even alluded to, in their Sacred Records), and that each of these Persons exercises an office perfectly distinct from that of either of the other two. Thus, to one person they ascribed the office of *creation*, to another the office of *redemption*, and to another the office of *sanctification* or *regeneration*, paying distinct worship and adoration to each, according

to his office, without ever reflecting, that all those offices belong alike to one and the same Divine Being, acting under different modes of operation. The consequence was, that some of them, though possibly not aware of what they were doing, worshipped three separate and distinct Gods, and that the generality were so confused and perplexed as to the real and proper object of their worship, that they were afraid of looking at any object, lest they should attribute to that object either too much honour and respect, or too little. Thus the separation of charity, faith, and good works, amongst this people, led to a separation far more tremendous, because far more mischievous, viz., the separation of the One Living and Eternal God into three distinct Persons, each of which Persons they conceived to be eternal, omnipotent, and infinite, yet each of them possessing distinct properties, and exercising distinct offices.

Another unhappy effect of the above separation, and what tended to widen it still further, was the misconception and misinterpretation of the sacred pages of revealed Wisdom. For notwithstanding the strong and constant testimony of those pages in favour of the eternal connection of charity, faith, and good works, it had unhappily come to pass, that that testimony was either entirely overlooked, or miserably perverted by the generality of readers. Thus the partisans of charity alone discovered nothing in the Holy Records but what had respect to their favourite principle, keeping out of sight the multiplied doctrines relative to faith and good works. In like manner the partisans of faith alone were hood-winked as to all the precepts of charity and well-doing, as were also the partisans of good works alone in regard to every exhortation to purity of love, and sanctity of belief. The holy and sublime purposes of the revelation of God were thus entirely frustrated and made of none effect in regard to this people. For those purposes, agreeable to the testimony of the revelation itself, were nothing more or less than to conjoin man with his God in every principle of his life, both in his will, in his understanding, and in his

operation ; in his will by the spirit of love and charity ; in his understanding by the knowledge of truth or faith ; and in his operation by doing or practising what a pure love and an enlightened knowledge required to be done and practised. But this law of heavenly *conjunction* was lamentably changed by this deluded people into a law of *disjunction*, while some were disposed to love what is good, some to believe what is true, and some to practise it, yet few were enlightened to see, that they could never be fully conjoined in life with the Great Father of Being, but by an union of His love, of His truth, and of His life in themselves, which is the same thing as an union of charity, of faith, and of good works.

It was an additional instance of misconception, on this occasion, that the Sacred Records of the revealed will and wisdom of the Most High were interpreted merely according to their *literal* expression and meaning, and that many began to doubt the existence of any higher or spiritual sense, and some absolutely denied the probability and possibility of such a sense. Yet it was earnestly contended by the more enlightened theologians in the kingdom, that as the words or speech of men must of necessity contain human ideas, and as those ideas are perfectly distinct from the expressions by which they are conveyed, in like manner, the words or speech of God must of necessity contain Divine ideas, and those ideas must also be distinct from their literal expressions or history. But notwithstanding the force of this reasoning, and the confirmation it received from the testimony of the Sacred Records themselves, it made little or no impression on the minds of a people, who, from their indolence of thought on spiritual subjects, had lost all that interior perception and discernment, which is so absolutely necessary to conduct to a right apprehension of the deep and hidden treasures of the Divine Wisdom. Accordingly, though they still retained for their Book of Revelation, the reverence with which they had been taught to read it in their childhood, yet it was evident that this reverence was grounded rather in the authority

of their parents and teachers, than in any internal conviction wrought in their own understandings by the sublime and heavenly truths contained in the Book itself. They saw therefore and revered nothing except the casket of the jewels of the eternal counsel, but in regard to the jewels themselves, they were as thoughtless and indifferent about them as if no such things existed, and some even despised the precious stones, at the very time that they honoured the containing casket with the most profound respect and adoration.

The mischiefs resulting from this separation of the literal sense of the Sacred Scriptures from their spiritual contents were incalculable, and tended still more to blind the understandings and corrupt the affections and practices of this infatuated people. Hence some, misled by a few particular expressions in the holy pages, which they interpreted according to their own prejudices, rather than in agreement with the light of the eternal truth, established the dreadful doctrine of *predestination*, and denying the freedom of the human will in spiritual concerns, converted in the same moment man into a stock or stone, and the Most Merciful God into an arbitrary, despotic, capricious, and cruel tyrant. Others again, allowing in speculation the freedom of the human will, denied it in practice, while they conceived that God would dispense His eternal rewards hereafter, not so much out of regard to the determinations of man's choice in respect to the objects of His supreme love and ruling affections, as according to the rule of His own sovereignty and omnipotence, by virtue of which He was able at any time to convert a sinner into a saint, and introduce him to the highest glories of heaven, whatsoever his preparation and qualifications might be to receive so high a blessedness. Others conceived the hereditary corruptions of man, in consequence of the transgressions of his first parents, to be such, and to have infected his whole mind with so deep a stain of sin, that he had no power or faculty left by which he could turn himself to God, and work out his own salvation. Others were misled by the

gloomy idea, that in order to prepare effectually to become partakers of the happiness and glories of heaven, it was necessary to renounce and discard at once, both from their affections and enjoyment, all the happiness, glories, and riches of this lower world. Others, in agreement with that idea, and making a wrong estimate of the nature of sin, admitted into their catalogue of crimes no offences but the recreations of animal life, such as music, dancing, cards, the exhibitions of the stage, &c., not aware that while they were thus persecuting with undue rigour the gratifications of nature, they were coniving at indulgences incalculably more criminal and dangerous, by overlooking, as of no account, the gratifications of envy, of spiritual pride, of selfish passions, of pharisaic rigour, and of anti-christian uncharitableness. In short, it is endless to tell in how many instances this people were betrayed both into speculative and practical error, by an undue attention to the *letter*, unconnected with, and unexplained by the *spirit* of the Sacred Scriptures.

Nor was it an evil of less magnitude, that in consequence of this external interpretation of the Sacred Records of Revealed Truth, both the reality and the nearness of the invisible world of departed spirits were almost entirely lost sight of, so that few comparatively believed in the existence of such a world, and fewer still were affected, as they ought to have been, by their close connection with its inhabitants and its influences. Yet none were hardy enough to deny the continuation of life after death, and some even assented to the truth so repeatedly inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, that there are such beings as angels, and that they occasionally interpose in the concerns of men. But with all this assent, a belief in another world was rather a speculative, floating, and unprofitable idea, than a practical, sound, and sober conviction of evangelical Truth, and therefore it produced no effect whatsoever on the life and conversation. For when men once begin to imagine that heaven is at a distance from them, the certain consequence, is

that they set themselves at a proportionable distance from heaven, by the cold and careless affection with which they regard its vast importance. In the meantime the pleasures and interests of the present world take the advantage, and being near, force themselves upon the attention, as if they constituted the great and only realities of human bliss. Hence, amongst this blinded people, the laws of their consociation and connection with the eternal world; the influences of that world and of its inhabitants, upon this; the nearness of the heavenly abodes, and also of the infernal; the continual operations of the angelic host in promoting man's conversion and regeneration, and of the diabolical crew in effecting his destruction; these were points of which they had not the slightest conception, because they related to concerns in which no interest was taken, and in favour of which no affection was excited.

Such then was the unhappy state to which this people were reduced, in consequence of the separation of charity, faith, and good works, in their hearts, in their understandings, and in their lives. They were become altogether external men; mistaking ceremony for godliness, assent for faith, pleasure for happiness, science for wisdom, title for nobility, and what they termed feeling and sensibility for brotherly love and Gospel charity. Religion thus was only their nominal law, while fashion, custom and opinion were their real guides and governors in all their concerns. And indeed how should it be otherwise when they had lost all just knowledge of their God, all just idea of the interior contents of the Sacred Pages, every right apprehension of evangelical life and duty, and at the same time all sober, rational conviction of the eternal concerns of that future kingdom, which ought, above every other consideration, to have fixed their attention and filled their affections. It was not then to be wondered at, that they were the willing slaves of their corruptions, when they were become dead to the acknowledgment of all those heavenly powers, by the assistance of which they could alone hope to gain the victory over themselves

and the world, and regain the life of God and the joys of paradise.

Adored, however, be the divine mercy! "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,"* and though the life of God and the joys of paradise may be lost for a time here on earth, yet they are not irrecoverable. Though darkness and error may occasionally prevail in the lower kingdoms of this world, yet the Most High leaves not Himself without a witness, but in all ages raises up holy men, whom He enlightens with His Wisdom, to disseminate and make known the blessed knowledge of His saving Truth, for the purpose of dissipating that darkness, of confounding that error, and of conveying and securing to the children of men the rich unfading treasures of eternal life and salvation.

How these gracious purposes were accomplished in the instance of the people under consideration, may be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The advice of a Sage, pointing out the best methods for the restoration of order, righteousness, and peace in the kingdom, with a particular account of his sentiments concerning true religion, concerning the Sacred Scriptures, and concerning the person, character, and office of Jesus Christ.

It is an old, but just observation, that when things are at the worst, they will mend, or, as a certain writer expresses it, extremity is God's opportunity for applying remedies and effecting deliverances, which could not be applied and effected on any other but an extreme occasion. Such is the continual operation of the divine providence of the Most High, who, there is reason to believe, permits man at times to fall into errors and evils, for the purpose of convincing him the better of

* Rom. v. 20.

his own natural corruptions, ignorance, and inclination to fall, and how much he stands in need of the perpetual aid of a divine power to prevent his falling.

These remarks cannot be more clearly illustrated nor more fully confirmed, than by the history and example of the people above described. For when by their thoughtlessness and inconsideration they had brought themselves to the very brink of ruin, and stood on the dreadful precipice, ready to plunge headlong down; when the empire of the powers of darkness prevailed almost universally, and every ray of the hope of restoration to the favour, protection and blessedness of heaven seemed to disappear, it pleased the "Lord to awake out of sleep, like a mighty man by reason of wine, and to smite His enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual reproach."* Yet, as in other similar cases, so in this, He thought it good to use the instrumentality of man to accomplish His saving purposes, not because He was not able to effect them by His own arm alone, but because His tender love towards mankind, always inclines Him to promote their highest happiness, by admitting them to a participation both in the wisdom of His counsels, and in the glory of their execution. Nor were such instruments wanting amongst the people whom He intended to save: for, notwithstanding the general corruption, there was still a small remnant provided and left of such as had not bowed the knee unto Baal, nor departed from the commandments of their God. Their numbers indeed were few, but their power with heaven was mighty, because they greatly feared the Most High, and kept His covenant, by walking in all humility, sincerity, and purity before Him. They were, besides, earnest and importunate at the throne of grace for the removal of mischief, which to their enlightened eyes, appeared big with general destruction. Their spirit, too, was universal, since they belonged to no particular sect or party, but loving and cherishing what was good, and of God, in all, they were the friends of all, because they were the friends of God. Such were

* Psalm lxxviii. 65, 66.

the men whom the Most High selected and appointed to be the ministers of His purposes, and the instruments of His providence, in effecting the reformation and consequent salvation of this people.

But amongst these benefactors of mankind there was one distinguished personage, whose rare talents and uncommon virtues peculiarly marked him as the chosen of heaven, and as a character highly qualified to be the organ of the counsels of the Most High, and to stand between the living and the dead, whilst he made known those counsels to this people. Indeed, there is every reason to believe, that as Moses of old was chosen of God to declare His divine will unto the children of Israel, and for this purpose, was providentially educated in the court of Pharaoh, and instructed and made learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, so this man was from his infancy destined to great deeds, and was accordingly initiated into all those sciences which were necessary for their accomplishment. He was the son of a pious and learned bishop, and his education was in agreement with his birth. He soon made a rapid progress in every branch of human literature, and astonished the world by the powers of his genius, the variety of his discoveries, and the solidity and sublimity of his reasonings. But his highest praise was, that in all his pursuits he never courted the applause of men, but made the will and the favour of God the only rule and measure of all his knowledge. When, therefore, the interesting period arrived, that he was to be employed in the more immediate service of his Maker and Redeemer, he voluntarily relinquished all his literary and worldly fame, and prepared himself to discharge the important duties of his new calling.

To an unbelieving world it is not easy to explain what this calling was, because an unbelieving world is always disposed to limit the operations of the Almighty, and to deny that He can do in a later age what He has been pleased to do in a former. Suffice it, therefore, to observe, that the study of the Sacred Scriptures always consti-

tuted a principal part of the employment of the above great and good man, and that the more he read, the more he was convinced how sadly the holy pages had been misinterpreted by mankind, and how little was apprehended and understood of their true divinity, sublimity, sanctity, and general meaning. It was given him also clearly to perceive, that every evil and error of man's life has its ground, either in his ignorance of the contents of the Holy Volume of revealed Truth, or in his unwillingness to obey its dictates, or in both. Accordingly, it was his constant and devout prayer that these mischiefs might be removed; and that, for this purpose, the veil might first be taken away, which tended to hide from the eyes of mortals the ineffable splendour, and most effulgent light of the eternal Wisdom, which lay concealed in the Book of Revelation. The Father of unutterable mercy was pleased to hear the prayer of His humble servant, and to open his understanding to understand the Scriptures, and to see the wonderful things of His divine law. At the same time, as many of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of old had their spiritual eyes opened to behold the great and glorious certainties of the invisible world, in like manner were the eyes of this distinguished child of God opened, for the purpose of enabling him to testify more fully to a wicked and unbelieving world, that there is a heaven and a hell, and that the things of the other world are the great enduring realities, of which the things of this world are but the perishable types and figures.

From that moment this enlightened Sage (for so he must be called), devoted his whole life to the instruction of mankind, by communicating to others, in writing, what he had seen and heard, and by unfolding the deep mysteries of the Word and Kingdom of God. Nothing can be grander than the subjects of his writings, and nothing more convincing, clear, and edifying than the manner in which those subjects are treated. The being of a God, and His goodness, wisdom, and power, manifested in the creation of the world; the redemption

wrought by Him, through His assuming the human nature, combating and subduing the powers of darkness, and making Himself known to His lost creatures as a Divine Man; the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of the divine Trinity; the internal spiritual sense of the Sacred Scriptures; the heavenly doctrines of Charity, Faith, Good Works, Repentance, Regeneration, Free-will, Baptism, the Holy Supper, and the Second Coming of the Lord; these were some of the important and interesting subjects amply discussed, and most convincingly illustrated in the writings of this most profound and enlightened theologian.

From a perusal of these writings, the rest of the persons concerned in the reformation of the kingdom were soon convinced that they could not accomplish their purpose more effectually than by consulting the pious and learned author, and submitting to his advice how they ought to proceed. Accordingly, they took the earliest opportunity of waiting upon him, and when the formalities of introduction were over, they acquainted him with the object of their visit, by informing him in a few words how deeply their minds were affected by the consideration of the declining state of evangelical religion in the kingdom, and that being convinced of the purity of his intentions, and of the vast superiority of his spiritual wisdom and discernment, they were desirous to be instructed by him concerning the best and shortest method of restoring it amongst the people.

To this declaration the Sage replied in the following words: I lament equally with you, my friends, the melancholy departure from the Gospel spirit, which the tempers and manners of the people of this kingdom at this day so plainly bespeak, wherein is fulfilled the sad prediction of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax cold." (Matt. xxiv. 12.) With you, too, I feel most happy to be, in the slightest respect, instrumental under the Divine Providence in promoting a restoration of that heavenly life and order, without which it is impossible the people can subsist in

prosperity and peace here, or in the hope of eternal happiness hereafter. But allow me to observe, that before pure evangelical religion can be restored in the kingdom, it will be necessary to ascertain, so as to understand clearly what pure evangelical religion is, and therefore it appears to me that this ought to be the first object of your enquiry.

And pray, Sir, said one of the reformers, may we be allowed to ask, what is your idea concerning pure evangelical religion?

Pure evangelical religion, replied the Sage, is nothing else but the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ operating in the wills, the understandings, and the actions of men, and leading them to communication and conjunction of life with that great God and Saviour, and to consociation with His angelic kingdom, in all those three constituent principles of human being.

But, what is it you mean, replied the reformer, by the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, said the Sage, is all the divine Good and divine Truth contained and revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. For the Holy Book, which we call the Bible, is nothing else but the *continent* of those eternal principles, let down from the bosom of the Most High, to turn man unto Himself, to replenish him with a fulness of the same blessed principles, so far as he is capable of receiving them, and thus to restore in him the image and likeness of his Creator, and to make him a subject of everlasting bliss. This does not appear, indeed, in all cases, from the letter of the Sacred Pages, because the letter, being adapted to the apprehension of men, is expressed frequently in a simple unadorned style, and abounds in many places with the histories and sayings of men. Nevertheless, all those histories and sayings, it is to be considered, were written under the immediate inspiration of the Almighty, and, therefore, whilst they externally and apparently contain nothing but human records, they internally and really contain and convey all the fulness

of the divine Love and Wisdom, insomuch that there is not a single sentence, which is not replenished with celestial Life and Truth. You are not, therefore, to judge the Holy Volume merely from its literal or natural meaning only, but from its spiritual contents; according to which latter it is that eternal Word by which the heavens and the earths were originally created, (see Psalm xxxiii. 6, John i. 3.) and which being in perpetual connection with its Divine Source, the Great Father of Being, forms at the same time the grand medium of preservation, blessing, communication, and conjunction between Him and His creatures.

I cannot quite comprehend, said the reformer, how two distinct senses or meanings can be contained under one and the same expression. Do you conceive that a spiritual or interior idea lies involved in every natural or external idea presented to view in the Sacred Scriptures?

I conceive, replied the Sage, that as when man speaks, he applies natural terms to express and convey his ideas, which terms are perfectly distinct from the ideas so expressed and conveyed, in like manner when God speaks, He also applies natural terms, and also natural histories, to express and convey His ideas, which terms and histories are likewise perfectly distinct from the ideas themselves. Thus, when Jesus Christ cautions His disciples against the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, (Matt. xvi. 6.) He evidently meant to express an idea distinct from that of *leaven*, and in so doing to give a spiritual caution, by guarding them against receiving the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. The same is true in all those other cases, where He describes Himself and His doctrine under natural figures and images, as where He calls Himself the Light of the World, a Door, a Vine, &c. &c., and compares his doctrine with seed, treasure hid in a field, godly pearls, a net, &c. &c. So in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, there is every satisfactory reason to conclude, that under the histories of the creation of the world, the life of man in Paradise, of his temptation, fall, and expulsion from

the happy garden; of the flood; of the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, &c. &c. are involved and described the mysteries of the divine Mercy, Wisdom, and Providence, as displayed in the redemption and regeneration of men, through the several successive periods of the church, as I have satisfactorily proved in my spiritual interpretation of those histories; from which interpretation it is evident, that the grand law according to which the Sacred Scriptures are written throughout, is the law of correspondence or agreement between things spiritual and things natural, by virtue of which eternal law, the latter things, in the language of God, are constantly applied to express the former.

I feel no objection, said the reformer, against admitting the reasonableness of your view of the Sacred Pages; and what you say on the subject is confirmed to my own mind, by the remarkable distinction which our Lord Jesus Christ makes between His *word* and His *speech*, where He says to the unbelieving Jews, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye do not hear my word:" (John viii. 43.) and in another place, "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak:" (John xii. 49.) from which distinctions it is evident to my mind, that the *word* and *speech* of our Lord Jesus Christ, or what He *says* and what He *speaks*, are perfectly distinct things, just as the ideas of man, and the language by which he expresses them, are distinct. But leaving this subject for future consideration, there is another enquiry of no small importance, which at present presses itself upon my attention, and which is this—Why do you call evangelical religion the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and do not rather call it the Word or Wisdom of God? Do you suppose that God and our Lord Jesus Christ are one and the same being?

To this the Sage replied—How is it possible for any Christian to conceive that God and our Lord Jesus Christ are not one and the same Divine, Infinite, and

Eternal Being? For is not God, "when made manifest in the flesh," named Jesus Christ? Is not God also called the Creator of the World, and is not our Lord Jesus Christ, too, called the Creator of the World? Is not God the Redeemer of the World, and is not our Lord Jesus Christ the same? Is not God likewise the Saviour and Regenerator, and are not the offices of salvation and regeneration ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ? Since, therefore, the Creator, Redeemer, Saviour, and Regenerator of the world, must needs be divine, infinite, and eternal, and since it is impossible to suppose more than *one* Creator, *one* Redeemer, *one* Saviour, and *one* Regenerator, it is impossible, for the same reason, to suppose that God and our Lord Jesus Christ are not one and the same Undivided, Infinite, and Eternal Being. All the difference in this case is, that our Lord Jesus Christ is a manifested, visible, and thus approachable God, by virtue of His assuming the human nature, and afterwards glorifying or making it one with the Divine; whereas God, or the Father, before the incarnation, was an unmanifested, invisible, and thus unapproachable God, being far removed in His hidden and divine Essence from all the apprehension of His fallen creatures, and still more so from their approach. It is a great and dangerous error, therefore, to suppose, with the Arians and Socinians, that our Lord Jesus Christ is not the True Eternal God, and it is also a great and dangerous error to suppose that He is not the only God, or that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not one in Him; and the only safe way of avoiding this latter error, is to believe and to confess that as the soul and body and operation of man make one man, so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost make one God in the glorified and divine Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father being His hidden divine Essence, the Son His manifested divine Form or Humanity, and the Holy Spirit His proceeding divine Operation. For thus the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is fully and devoutly acknowledged and worshipped, and the sincere worshipper, to his

unspeakable comfort, is delivered from all doubt and perplexity as to the proper Object of his worship, whilst he humbly draws nigh unto the divine Body or Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and believes with St. Paul, that in that Humanity "dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily;" (Coloss. ii. 9.) and with St. John, "that this is the true God and eternal life;" (1 John v. 20.) and with our Lord Jesus Christ himself, that "who-soever seeth, knoweth, and believeth in Him, seeth, knoweth, and believeth in the Father." (John xiv. 7 9.)

I seem convinced, said the reformer, of the truth of your observations, but still a difficulty occurs to my mind, viz., how to reconcile with that truth some passages of the Sacred Scriptures where mention is made of Jesus Christ being "sent of the Father," of His "praying to and conversing with the Father," and of His doing the will of His Father, &c. &c., all which expressions appear to imply inferiority on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time a distinction of personality.

I agree, replied the Sage, that an *appearance* of inferiority, and also an *appearance* of a distinct personality, is presented to view in the passages you refer to; but allow me to observe, that all such appearances entirely vanish, when it is considered that the passages relate solely to the *humanity* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not at all to His divinity. For, as to His humanity, it was indeed true that He was "sent of the Father," or, as He himself otherwise expresses it, "came forth from the Father." As to His humanity, also, "He prayed to and conversed with the Father," and declared that He came "to do the will of the Father." But this humanity, it ought to be remembered, when it had passed through its previous necessary states of submission and humiliation, was finally glorified, or made divine, by a full and complete union with the essential Divinity, or Father dwelling in it, agreeable to these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, where He says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and if God be glorified in Him, God

shall also glorify Him in himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." (John xiii. 31, 32.) And what is the language of glorification in which that humanity is afterwards described? Let us consult the Sacred Records, and we shall find the consolatory declarations, where it is written on the occasion, "I and my Father are one; believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." (John x. 30, xiv. 9, 10, 11; Matt. xxviii. 18; Rev. i. 8, 11, 17.) Learn, then, to distinguish well between the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ in its state of humiliation or of apparent separation from the Father, and in its state of exaltation, or of full union with the Father, and all your difficulties will then be completely done away, and you will rejoice in the bright light of the eternal Truth beaming forth in its full radiance from the glorified Body of the great Redeemer.

After a short silence on the part of the reformers, occasioned by the mingled sensations of joy and surprise, which the Sage's discourse excited in their minds, one of them thus resumed the conversation:—Your reply, said he, addressing himself to the Sage, at once astonishes, delights, and edifies me, because I now see clearly what I never so plainly saw before, that in our Lord Jesus Christ the Father and the Son, or the Divinity and the Humanity, are ONE, as the soul and the body of man are one, and consequently that there is only one God, in heaven and in the church, and that that God is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; thus there is only one Object of divine worship and adoration. Yet pardon, I entreat you, my ignorance, when I frankly confess to you, that I am not able to reconcile immediately with this idea all that is said in the Sacred Scriptures concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, as being a Redeemer, by making atonement for sin, and as being a Mediator between God and man, by exercising the offices of an Advocate and Intercessor at the throne of mercy, in favour of the human race.

You will find no difficulty at all on this subject, replied the Sage, if you will only look up to the Great Incarnate God for illumination, and at the same time consider attentively the proper, spiritual, and genuine meaning of the terms Redemption, Atonement, Mediation, and Intercession. But first of all, it will be necessary to discard entirely from your mind the commonly prevailing idea, which supposes the redemption wrought by the Great Saviour to consist in His vicarious sacrifice of Himself for the purpose of making satisfaction to His offended Father for the sins of the world, and that this satisfaction was made by the passion of the cross. Discard, I say, this idea, and you will see at once, by a light bright as the meridian sun, that the Passion of the Cross was not in itself Redemption, but only the means, and the chief means, of effecting Redemption. For Redemption properly considered, is nothing more or less than the deliverance of man from the "powers of darkness," and his reinstatement thereby in the life, in the favour, in the protection, and in the blessing of heaven and of its God. But deliverance from the tyranny of the "powers of darkness" implies that those powers must be first combated and subdued; and reinstatement in the life, in the favour, in the protection, and in the blessing of heaven and of its God, implies that man must be first restored to some state of communication and conjunction of life with God and heaven. Here, therefore, you may discover all that the Passion of the Cross did, or could do, towards effecting Redemption, and why so much stress is laid upon that last process of suffering in the Scriptures. The Passion of the Cross was, in the first place, the conclusion of that grand combat of the Incarnate God, by which the "powers of darkness" were subdued and removed from man; and in the next place, it was the severe and final trial and humiliation, by which the Humanity of the Redeemer was fully united to His Divinity, and thereby rendered the medium of God's communication and conjunction with man, and of man's communication and conjunction with God. Our Lord

Jesus Christ therefore observes, about the time of that passion, and in reference to it, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me;" (John xii. 31, 32.) plainly teaching that by the Passion of the Cross was effected the separation from man of the infernal crew, called "the prince of this world," and at the same time an elevation of the Humanity to a closer union with the Divinity, by virtue of which all being drawn unto that Humanity, might recover again communication and conjunction with the Divinity dwelling in it.

Are we then to suppose, said the reformer, that the Redemption wrought, and the Atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, consisted solely in the subjugation of the powers of darkness, and in the glorification of His human nature by uniting it with the Divine?

Yes, replied the Sage, because nothing else was wanting to reinstate fallen man in the Divine favour, order, protection, and blessing, but such a subjugation and such a glorification. Some, indeed, have supposed that God required satisfaction to be made to His offended justice, and that our Lord Jesus Christ made this satisfaction, or, as others term it, this atonement, by His sufferings and death on the Cross. And it must be confessed that God did require satisfaction, and the satisfaction too of His justice; but then it ought to be recollected that the Divine Justice is the same thing as the Divine Love, and that the satisfaction of justice therefore is the same with the satisfaction of love, consequently it could be nothing more or less than the satisfaction of doing all that Infinite Love could do to save the world. This was done by our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ really and truly satisfied the Divine Justice, and made atonement for the sins of the whole world, because our Lord Jesus Christ, by destroying that terrible ascendancy which the powers of darkness had usurped over human minds, and at the same time, by

giving to all human minds access to a Divine Power in His Glorified Humanity, did all that love could do to save mankind, and in so doing restored to every man the possibility of salvation.

You conceive, then, said the reformer, if I comprehend you rightly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is a Mediator and an Intercessor by virtue of his Divine Humanity, by and through which all mankind have access unto the Divinity which dwelleth in it?

That is my meaning, replied the Sage; for such had been the terrible effect of sin upon the human mind, that mankind retained no longer any knowledge of the Great Creator, and consequently could no longer make any approaches towards communication and conjunction with Him; for how is it possible to approach a being of whom we know nothing? It became necessary, therefore, for that Creator, in order to prevent the eternal separation of His creatures from Himself, to provide a Medium, by and through which He might be again known and loved, and by and through which communication might again be opened, and conjunction wrought between Himself and His otherwise lost creatures. Such a Medium was the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning which it is therefore written, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) For by and through that Humanity God rendered Himself at once visible, knowable, and approachable, to those who saw Him in the flesh, and by the glorification of that Humanity, through its union with the Divinity, He rendered Himself eternally visible, knowable, and approachable to all, who by faith and love would believe in Him and come unto Him, under that manifestation. Our Lord Jesus Christ therefore is not a Mediator and an Intercessor with the Father according to the common and human idea of one person mediating and interceding with another; but He is a Mediator and an Intercessor according to the Spiritual and Divine idea of presenting and holding forth to all mankind an

everlasting Medium of conjunction and communication with the eternal Father, by and through that Humanity which the eternal Father chose, assumed, and glorified for that saving and blessed purpose. And this is the true ground and reason of those numberless exhortations in the Sacred Scriptures to "come unto Jesus Christ," to "abide in Him," to "believe in Him," &c. &c., (Matt. xi. 28.; John xv. 4., xiv. 1.) because there is now no other mode or medium of approaching the hidden, invisible deity called the Father, and of finding communication and conjunction of life with Him, but that manifested, visible, and Divine Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the hidden invisible Father is for ever present and operative, with which too He is intimately united, and by which He is pleased to invite and to draw all His fallen creatures to Himself.

I observe, said one of the reformers, that you frequently speak of what you term the Divine Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; but are you sure that all men will be able to comprehend what you mean by this term? For my own part, I must freely confess, that it would give me satisfaction to have it more distinctly explained, especially as it is a new term, which nowhere occurs in the Sacred Scriptures.

There can surely be no difficulty, replied the Sage, in conceiving what is meant by the Divine Humanity of the Great Redeemer, provided there be a previous acknowledgment that He is both God and Man in one undivided Person. For Humanity is a term which relates to our Lord Jesus Christ as a Man, and when it is said that this Humanity is *divine*, it evidently implies that the Godhead, or Divine Essence, is incorporated within it, agreeable to the testimony of St. Paul, where he says, "In Him" (our Lord Jesus Christ) "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Coloss. ii. 9) I use therefore the term Divine Humanity, because there is no other term which will serve so well to distinguish the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ from that of another man. For of the humanity of another

man, it never can properly be said that it is *divine*, but only that it is *natural*, if he be a merely natural man, or *rational*, if he be a rational man, or *spiritual*, if he be a spiritual man. But of our Lord Jesus Christ it may with the utmost propriety be asserted, that His Humanity is Divine, because He is a Divine Man, and therefore, if there be no difficulty in apprehending that the humanity of a natural man is a natural humanity, and that the humanity of a rational man is a rational humanity, and that the humanity of a spiritual man is a spiritual humanity, there can be none in apprehending also that the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ is a Divine Humanity.

I thank you, said the reformer, for the very satisfactory explanation which you have given, as well as for the weighty arguments by which you have convinced me of the Divinity of the Great Redeemer, and enforced upon me the absolute necessity of approaching and worshipping Him, and Him only, as my God, if I ever hope to derive any real and saving benefits from His redemption. I am persuaded also, if I may judge from their approving countenances, that my brethren around me are gratified and instructed equally with myself. But there is yet another point, on which I must beg leave to trespass on your patience, and solicit information. You said that true evangelical religion is the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ operating in the wills, in the understandings, and in the actions of men, &c. It would give me particular satisfaction, and I think also I can promise the same for my brethren, if you would briefly unfold to us what you mean by this threefold operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall feel myself happy, replied the Sage, to satisfy your inquiry at some future time, but at present I have a particular engagement which calls me away. If you will do me the favour to meet me in the morning, a more convenient opportunity will, I trust, be presented for continuing our discourse.

CHAPTER III.

A continuation of the Sage's advice, particularly concerning the Divine Operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Human Will.

At an early hour the next morning, the reformers assembled again at the Sage's house, when he thus resumed the discourse. By the *will*, said he, I would be understood to mean the seat or receptacle of man's love and affections, consequently, if he be a good man, the seat or receptacle of heavenly love or goodness, for this is what constitutes the love and affections of such a man. By the *understanding* I would be understood to mean the receptacle or seat of man's wisdom and thought, consequently, if he be a good man, the seat or receptacle of heavenly Wisdom or Truth, since that is what constitutes the wisdom and thought of such a man. And by *actions* I would be understood to mean the whole of his operations, as derived from his will and understanding, or from his love and wisdom, conjoined. It is a well-known fact, that every man consists of these three grand constituent principles, and that without the combination of all three he would not be a man. For take away any one of them and you leave a deficiency and a vacuity in the constitution of man, which utterly destroy his being, and make him cease to be a man. Take away, for instance, the will or love, and what remains but understanding without life, and operation without energy? Take away again the understanding, and what remains but a blind thoughtless love, and a blind unguided and undetermined operation? Lastly, take away the operation, and how plain is it to see that you leave nothing but abstract fruitless principles, of no use, blessing, or benefit whatsoever, either to the possessor or to any one else, which are like a head and body without arms and hands, or like a bird flying in the air without the possibility of lighting on the ground to build its nest, to lay its eggs, and to hatch its young. I said, therefore, that true

evangelical religion is the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ operative in man's will, in his understanding, and in his actions, because until it becomes operative in these three principles conjointly, it cannot be said to take full possession of the being who consists of those principles.

And what, said the reformer, do you mean by the operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the human will?

It is impossible, replied the Sage, to give a full and satisfactory answer to your question, until it be well considered and understood what the state of the human will is, before it becomes admissive of the Divine Operation; and therefore this ought to be the first object of our attention. Now every one knows, or may know, that the human will previous to its admission and reception of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the defiled abode of every unclean and abominable affection, being under the absolute dominion of self-love and of the love of the world and of the flesh, which loves, like so many tyrannical masters, rule the man as their vile and abject slave. In the meantime, the love of God and neighbourly love, with all the heavenly graces and virtues thence derived, are accounted as trifling and insignificant things, and are degraded accordingly. Thus, in every such polluted will there is an inversion of all order, earthly things being exalted above heavenly, temporal things above eternal, evil above good, and the creature above the Creator. Yet the man himself still makes a show of worshipping God and of serving his neighbour, but then his worship of God is not for the sake of God, nor the service done to his neighbour for the sake of his neighbour, but for some selfish and worldly ends which regard himself, or, what amounts to the same thing, which regard those with whom he is more immediately connected, either by the ties of relationship, or by other merely natural bonds. For in all his actions he seeks to aggrandize his own merits, more than to consult the Divine will and promote the Divine glory. He perceives,

too, no disgust or dissatisfaction in evils, such as enmity, hatred, revenge, adultery, &c. &c., but under the pernicious influence of such abominations, he indulges his imagination in all the licentiousness of thought about them. The human will, therefore, in this unhappy and perverted state, is in its form as a little hell, and in its quality as an individual devil; because all things appertaining to it are in infernal disorder and death, which are in direct opposition to the order and life of heaven.

From this picture then of the state of the human will, before it becomes admmissive of the Divine Operation, you will be enabled clearly to discern the nature and effects of that operation, when it is allowed freely and fully to exert itself in the supreme or voluntary principle of the human mind. For when the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ enters and takes possession of the human will, it presently changes the whole stream and current of man's love and affections, so that whereas he before loved himself and the world above all things, he now begins to love God and his neighbour above himself and the world. The governing ends and intentions of his life are thus totally inverted, being now occupied principally about his eternal interests, and compelling every temporal care and concern to yield and submit to the control of the grand everlasting realities which he has continually in view, and which he exalts in his supreme affection. His joys and delights, too, partake of the change, for all joy and delight is the child and creature of the affection, and is always of a quality similar to that of its parent, being unstable, empty, and vain, where the affection is fixed on unstable, empty, and vain objects; but, on the contrary, being permanent, full, and substantial, where the affection is pointed at permanent, full, and substantial objects. He now perceives delight therefore in the worship of God for the sake of God, and in serving his neighbour for the sake of his neighbour, and thus in doing good for the sake of good, and in speaking truth for the sake of truth. He

is also averse to all ideas of merit arising from any considerations of his principles or of his practice; and he shuns and abominates evils, such as enmity, hatred, revenge, adultery, &c., &c., and the very intentional thought of such things. Nor are these happy effects to be attributed to any thing like compulsion, or to an arbitrary, irresistible operation, on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word; for were this the case, they could not be happy effects, since all happiness is the result not of force, but of the most perfect freedom. The true Christian, therefore, who loves and rejoices in God above all things, loves and rejoices freely, and indeed so freely, that he accounts it the greatest slavery not to love and rejoice in God, and opposes such slavery as he would shun the greatest of all possible miseries. In short, when the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ begins to manifest its heavenly operation on the human will, then you will presently see heaven opened and paradise restored, because then you will see the miserable empire of all the disorderly passions and affections overturned, whilst selfish pride and worldly covetousness give place to heaven-born humility, contentment, and charity, and the soul of man, by the reception of the Divine Spirit, is converted into that blessed garden of which it is written "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah lv. 13.)

But how, said the reformer, is this operation on the human will to be effected? Is man to be active on the occasion, or is he to be altogether passive?

He must be both, replied the Sage, otherwise he can never become a meet subject of the operation in question. For if he be active without passivity, his activity, in such case, will presently degenerate into a selfish activity, which will but widen the separation between him and God; and if he be merely passive, without the exercise of any activity, his passivity, in such case, will end in

torpor, indolence, and supineness, and the consequence will be, that instead of becoming a happy Christian, he will be changed into a lifeless log. The eternal law, therefore, of the Divine Wisdom imposed on this occasion is, that man ought to act freely, *as of himself*, but yet to confess and to acknowledge inwardly that all his power of acting is from our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus he ought freely and *as of himself* to search out and to renounce his natural evils, to resist temptations, to subdue his passions, in short, to do the work of Gospel repentance, in which case, the Divine Mercy inspires him gently and gradually with the love of its own graces and excellences, until at length his mind is made sensible of the Supreme Good, and loving it freely and without restraint, he finds no difficulty, and feels no pain in sacrificing every inferior good on its golden altar.

I can easily conceive, said the reformer, what you mean by active duty on this occasion, but I confess, I cannot so clearly comprehend the nature and meaning of passive duty. Will you therefore have the goodness to explain it to me?

By passive duty, replied the Sage, I would be understood to mean, in this case, the duty of humble, submissive, and grateful acknowledgment, not only that all real saving good is from God, and nothing at all from man, but likewise that man's power of application for that good is also from God, and not at all from himself. Thus the power by which man first converts himself to God, the power of supplication, the power to repent, the power to resist evil, &c., &c., is wholly from God; and unless it be passively, yet thankfully acknowledged to be so, the very exercise of such power would but tend to separate man further from God, instead of leading, as it was designed to do, to a closer and more intimate conjunction with Him. Passive duty, on this occasion, also further implies, that man should be patient, submissive, and resigned under all those trials and sufferings which are permitted of the Divine Providence, as the means of

his purification, and which altogether form that blessed cross, of which it is written, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.)

Is it to be supposed then, said the reformer, that the Supreme Good, when it takes possession of the human will, requires, as you just now seemed to intimate, the sacrifice of every inferior good?

If by sacrifice, replied the Sage, you mean the annihilation of every inferior good, this is not required; but if by sacrifice, in this case, you mean the submission of an inferior good to the Supreme, this most certainly is required, and for the best of all reasons, because if an inferior good refuses to submit itself to the supreme, from that moment it ceases to be a Good, and is converted into an evil. For what, let me ask, is the true source of all evil, but the separation of a good from its Divine Original? And what is the true cause of such separation, but the want of submission to that Original, on the part of the good so separated; in other words, the want of acknowledgement that every good is from God, and not from man, and that, consequently, every good is the property of God, more than of man? The eternal law therefore respecting all inferior goods, such as riches, honours, and pleasures, the gratifications of sense, the pre-eminence of talents, the distinctions of birth, the extent of science, &c. &c. is this, that they are real blessings to their proprietor, if humbly and gratefully acknowledged to be from God; but real curses, if there be no such acknowledgment. True religion, then, does not require the annihilation of temporal goods and of temporal joys, as a security against their abuse, any more than it requires a man to cut off his feet to prevent his stumbling; it only requires that a man should use them in the order of God, and the order of God requires that His eternal Love, and Word, and Kingdom should be exalted above them, and acknowledged as their Divine Source and Origin, in which happy case, they are made to administer to man's eternal happiness, as they were intended to do.

In the regenerate man, therefore, whose will is admisible of the Divine Operation, an orderly arrangement takes place in all the kinds and degrees of good, the superior good being exalted above the inferior, or the more interior good above the exterior, and all being restored to the form of heaven, so that the man himself may be called a little heaven. In like manner an arrangement takes place in all the kinds and degrees of evil, so that whereas external evils were before exalted above internal, the case is now reversed, and internal evils are seen clearly to be both more defiled in their qualities, and more mischievous in their consequences than external.

A sudden interruption was here given to the discourse, by the arrival of a stranger, and it was not resumed till the following day, when it was agreed to meet again, for the purpose of continuing and concluding the interesting discussion. The very important and edifying remarks made on the occasion may be seen in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Continuation of the Sage's advice for the restoration of Order, Righteousness, and Peace in the kingdom, with an account of his sentiments concerning the Divine Operation on the human understanding.

THE reformers assembled again at the Sage's house, on the following day, and being seated as before, the conversation was renewed by the reformer who had before proposed so many enquiries, and he began in these words. You have convinced both my brethren and myself, said he (addressing himself to the Sage), that true evangelical religion is the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ operative on the human will. You have convinced us yet further, what the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ really is, and what and who our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is, by teaching us that our Lord Jesus Christ is

the Only True God of heaven and earth, and that His Word or Wisdom is contained in the Book of Revelation which we call the Bible, and which, in its interior senses, is accommodated to all degrees of human and of angelic intelligences, and in its inmost sense is Divine. You have explained also, in the most satisfactory manner, what you mean by the operation of that Word or Wisdom upon the *Will* of man. May we now request the additional favour that you will proceed to unfold to our view, in a way best suited to our apprehension, what we are to conceive respecting the operation of the same Word or Wisdom on the *human understanding* and on *human actions*, which was another operation pointed out by you as connected with the former?

It has already been shewn, replied the Sage, that the understanding of man was created to be the seat or receptacle of the Divine Wisdom or Truth, as the will was created to be the seat or receptacle of the Divine Love or Good. For as Love and Wisdom in God, though united in one, are yet perfectly distinct principles, so the will and understanding of man, though intended to be made one, are yet perfectly distinct. Accordingly it is found by daily experience, that it is possible for these two principles to be divided, since it is possible for the will to oppose the understanding, and for the understanding in its turn to oppose the will, as is always the case when a man knows a thing to be right and good, and yet does not love it, or when he loves it, and yet is in persuasions of faith and of knowledge which are contrary to it. It is therefore a point of the first importance in the formation of a religious mind and character, that the will and the understanding should be brought into harmony and unity, to the intent that they may bless, purify, and perfect each other as they were by creation designed to do. For who cannot see that these two faculties exercise a reciprocal and perpetual operation on each other, and that whether they are influenced by good or by evil, they have a mutual tendency to strengthen in each other the principle by which they are influenced?

Thus, in the case of a good man, purity of the will leads to clearness of the *understanding*, and clearness of the *understanding*, in its turn, contributes to the further purification of the will. And so, likewise, in the case of a wicked man, perverseness of the will conducts to infatuation of the *understanding*, while infatuation of the *understanding* contributes by its actions to the increase of perverseness in the *will*. This mutual operation of each faculty on the other, may be illustrated by the mutual operation of those two principal organs in the human body, the heart and the lungs, on each other; since it is a fact, fully established by anatomists and physiologists, that both the preservation and the perfection of the operation of each organ depends on that of the other.

Is it to be supposed, said one of the reformers, that this mutual action of the *will* and of the *understanding* on each other, was originally ordained by the great Creator?

Doubtless, replied the Sage, yet originally under this law, that the love of the Supreme Good in the *will* should rule the *understanding*, as the active governing principle of its life, and that the Wisdom of that Good in the *understanding*, by its re-action, should purify, exalt, and bless the will. But when sin had disturbed and perverted the order of God and of heaven in human minds, and thereby utterly defiled and destroyed all the *will* of Good, then it was provided of the Divine Mercy, that the *understanding*, for a time, should rule the *will*, for the purpose of restoring man to that love of the Supreme Good, and to that conjunction with God and with heaven, which had been lost. With this view it was ordained that the Truth of God, which is the same thing as His eternal Word or Wisdom, should be planted in the *understanding*, and that by the truth so implanted, a new will might be formed, capable of again loving and cherishing the Supreme Good, and thus of restoring to man his lost paradise of conjunction with God and with heaven. Here, therefore, you may discern the true

nature of the operation of the Divine Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the intellectual faculty of man, so totally blind, by nature, as to the knowledge of its truest or eternal interest. It consists in the insemination of the Eternal Truth, whereby the human mind is enabled to discern its true Good, and to pursue it; to discover the disorders into which it has fallen through sin, and to rectify those disorders by the regulation of its love and affections; to distinguish what is of God and what is not of God, and by rejecting the latter, to cherish and secure the former; to exert itself in the recovery of the Divine image and likeness which it has lost; to ascend from earthly things to heavenly, from natural to spiritual, from sensual to Divine; in short to open in itself a way to paradise, to enter again into the happy garden, to eat of the Tree of Life, and to live for ever. Such is the first operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the understanding of man, while it is to bear rule over his will, and re-convert him to the possession of the Supreme Good. But when this blessed end is accomplished, and the will is exalted to its original sovereignty, by admitting the influences of the love of God and of mutual love, the operation of the Divine Word or Wisdom, in this case, is no longer *immediately* into the understanding, but *mediately* through the will, leading it to approve, to confirm, and to extend the eternal blessedness, and superior advantages of that Life, Love, and Kingdom, which the *will* has chosen and accepted for its inheritance.

If it would not be giving you too much trouble, said the reformer, I should esteem it a favour to be informed what part man has to act, or what his rule of duty is, in regard to this operation of the Divine Word or Wisdom on his understanding.

The duty of man, on this occasion, replied the Sage, is both *active* and *passive*, as in the case of the Divine Operation on his will, which was adverted to yesterday. For God doth not *force* the illumination of Truth upon any one, because what is forced can never be received

with delight, and unless it be received with delight, it cannot benefit the person who receives it. It is enough that God, in His adorable Mercy, with a view to the happiness and salvation of His creatures, inspires them with the affection of truth, and then leaves them free to gratify or to extinguish that affection. God, also, in His Holy Word, supplies man with a copious store of the most sublime and heavenly truths; for the Book of Revelation is nothing else but a transcript of those numberless and eternal verities, which form the basis of the heavenly world and of its innumerable Societies, and which have their origin in the Divine Love of the Most High. Here, therefore, may be plainly discovered the *active* duty of man in regard to the illumination of Truth, or to the operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on his intellectual faculty. He must not idly hang down his hands, and wait for illumination, under the indolent expectation that God will immediately inspire him with the knowledge of the Truth; but he must apply to the means which God has given him for the acquisition of knowledge. He must, therefore, above all things, cherish in his mind the affection of Truth, and guard, with a devout watchfulness, against the encroachments of those worldly and sensual objects, which would either suffocate, pervert, or extinguish it. Recollecting, in the next place, that saving Truth can be derived from no other source than from the Word of God, he must study diligently the Sacred Pages of Divine Revelation, not with a critical view to gain the reputation of being a great scholar, nor yet with a bigoted view to defend the doctrines of his own particular church or sect, but with a devout and pious view to become wise in the Wisdom of God; and to store up in his mind those sacred counsels of the Divine Love, which may conduct him, by their silver thread, through the intricate mazes of the labyrinth of his natural corruptions, to the bright regions of the purity, favour, protection and blessing of his heavenly Father. When he has thus searched the Scriptures, and like the merchantman in the parable,

sought and found the rich pearls of the Eternal Truth, and especially the "one pearl of great price," (Matt. xiii. 45, 46.) which is the knowledge of the Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, he must next, in imitation of the same merchantman, "sell all that he hath, and buy that pearl." In other words, he must account all other things, such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, of no value, when set in competition with the riches, honours, and pleasures resulting from the knowledge of the Incarnate God; otherwise he will soon be deprived of the pearls he has found, and his crown will be taken away from him. In storing up, therefore, the treasures of heavenly Wisdom in his mind, for the purposes of salvation, he will remember the divine advice of our Lord, where He says on the occasion, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matt. vi. 19, 20.) By these words he will be instructed that his treasures of divine knowledge can never be secure, until they are raised out of the external earthly man or mind, into the sacred heavenly repository of the internal man or mind. And since this purpose cannot be accomplished, but by regulating his affections and thoughts, his tempers and passions, his intentions and ends of life, in exact conformity to the knowledge which he has imbibed, therefore he will see it to be his principal duty, and his most important concern to live well, that so he may dwell perpetually in that element of the Divine Love and charity, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." For knowledge unpractised is always perishable knowledge, having place only in the external court of man's outward memory, and not being yet admitted into the interior and secure recesses of his life and love; whereas knowledge brought into practice is imperishable, since being connected in such case with heavenly love, it forms a

part of that glorious church founded on a rock of which it is written, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.)

And what, asked the reformer, do you conceive to be the *passive* duties imposed on man, in regard to the illumination of the Eternal Truth?

Passive duty, replied the Sage, on this occasion, as on the occasion of the operation of the Divine Word or Wisdom on the human will, before adverted to, is the submissive, grateful acknowledgment that every grace and excellence, every talent, and all knowledge and science are from God, and nothing at all from man; and that, consequently, they all properly belong unto God, and are only *lent* unto man for use and enjoyment. This duty, in regard to the reception and illumination of Truth, is perhaps, of more difficult practice, than in regard to the reception and improvement of Good. For every man is naturally proud of his intellectual powers and capacities, and therefore when he begins to exercise them in the acquirement of divine knowledge, it is at first no easy thing for him to confess that not only the knowledge, but also the power and capacity to receive it is from God. Yet until this confession is made, and made from the heart, both with freedom and delight, the illumination, even of the brightest truths, only tends to exalt a man more and more in the vanity of his own self-sufficiency and self-importance. And this is the reason why it is necessary for every disciple in the school of heavenly Truth, to exercise himself well in the practice of the above passive duty, that so he may secure to himself the double blessing of deliverance from a dangerous self-conceit, and, at the same time, of humble delightful gratitude, in the acknowledgment that the all of *truth*, of *knowledge*, and of *science*, as well as the all of the capacity to receive them, is from God, and is God's.

The reformer was proceeding to press further inquiries on the Sage, particularly respecting the operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the *actions* of man, and respecting also the duties of man as con-

nected with that operation, when he was interrupted by the disagreeable intelligence of some violent disturbances having taken place among the people, in consequence of some opinions which had been discovered in the Sage's writings, and which, it was insisted, were dangerous to the established religion of the kingdom. The nature and progress of those disturbances, may be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V.

Containing an account of some Disturbances which took place amongst the people, in consequence of the Sage's opinions, together with a relation of the Sage's advice on the occasion.

It was a remark of an ancient philosopher, that "if virtue was to make her appearance on earth in a human form, she would attract the admiration of all beholders, and be received with universal respect and esteem." But the justness of this sentiment has never been confirmed by fact; on the contrary, in many cases it has been contradicted, especially in that most memorable and distinguished one of all, the appearance of the Incarnate God to instruct, to redeem, and to save a fallen world. For what was this distinguished Personage, but the *most essential*, because Divine Virtue? and yet when manifested in a Human Form, how was He received and treated by that unbelieving and wicked world which He came to save? "He hath a devil, and is mad," (John x. 20.) was the reproachful cry of some, whilst "Crucify him! crucify him!" (Luke xxiii. 21.) was the angry and vindictive language of others. Thus, instead of meeting with universal respect and esteem, according to the philosopher's groundless conceit, this form of the most perfect and consummate Virtue was almost universally derided, vilified, hated, blasphemed, and rejected.

Did the above remark of the philosopher, want any further testimony to confute it, the case of the Sage,

under consideration, might be alone sufficient to prove, that so long as the world continues to be what it is, viz., a composition of sin, misled by error, blinded by ignorance, and governed by prejudice, so long the most perfect Virtue in human form, instead of exciting universal respect and esteem, has little to look for but contempt and reproach, contumely and abuse, hatred and persecution. For if any human being ever had pretensions to a superiority of virtue, it was our Sage; and yet, this superiority only served to raise him to an eminence, which, by exposing him more to public view, rendered him more the object of scorn to those whose chief happiness consists in deriding a wisdom which they are unable to comprehend, and in depreciating a virtue which they are unwilling to practise. Whilst his example, however, impeached the above judgment of the ancient philosopher, it tended to confirm and establish a maxim of infinitely superior Wisdom delivered by the Chief of Philosophers, where He says to His disciples, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep your's also." (John xv. 20.) How this effect was wrought, and what were the instruments of producing it, shall now be recorded.

In every kingdom, where the true religion has been taught and established, there has always been found a description of persons, more zealous for the form of godliness than for its power, consequently more contentious about opinions, creeds, and formularies of faith, than intent upon real piety, charity, humility, and purification of heart and life before God. Such were the Jewish Pharisees, at the time our Lord came into the world, and such were many of the people of the kingdom under consideration, at the time of the Sage's appearance amongst them. It was presently therefore rumoured, by those who had an interest in such evil reports, that many of the Sage's opinions were what they termed *heterodox*, by which was meant, opposite to the established religion of the country. For, in deciding on the merit or demerit of theological opinions, they did not consider so much

what was in agreement, or otherwise, with the infallible doctrines of the Eternal Truth, as what was in agreement, or otherwise, with the fallible systems and traditions of erring men. When, therefore, they discovered that the Sage, in all his theological writings, was intent on recalling the people to the ways of true repentance, and faith in the Incarnate God; and that for this purpose, he taught and urged strongly the necessity of forsaking their sins, of combating their corruptions, of cherishing the heavenly graces of charity and humility, of living good lives, and of worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ as the Only God of heaven and of earth, some insisted that all this was derogatory to the merits of the Redeemer, by calling the people to depend on their own exertions, more than on His blood. Others said, that the Atonement was thus made of none effect, and that, beside, the doctrine of the Sacred Trinity was denied, by exalting our Lord Jesus Christ *alone*, and thus setting aside the other two Divine Persons, called the Father and the Holy Ghost. The *Solifidians*, or they who maintained the doctrine "of salvation by faith alone," contended, that the Sage, in preaching the necessity of good works, proved himself to be a false prophet, and a blind leader of the blind. The *Predestinarians*, or they who taught that all salvation is from the sovereignty of Divine Grace, without any respect to the operations of man, ranked the Sage among the reprobate, because he was bold to assert the freedom of the human will, in all things appertaining to Eternal Life. The *Arians* and *Socinians* too, who denied the Divinity of the Redeemer, could not endure a writer, who so clearly proved our Lord Jesus Christ to be ONE with the Eternal Father both in Essence, in Person, and in Operation. The *Enthusiast* was offended at seeing the axe laid to the root of enthusiasm, whilst it was taught by the Sage, that the written Word of God is the only infallible medium of instruction, and the only sure guide of man in his spiritual concerns. The *Formalist* in religion had no patience with a teacher who insisted so constantly

on the need of inward purification and regeneration, to restore man to conjunction with his God. The gloomy *Ascetic*, in like manner, who flattered himself with the hope of heaven, because he renounced all the innocent pleasures and recreations of life, was indignant at the destruction of his hope, whilst he saw it maintained with so much reasonableness, in the writings of the Sage, that the way to the abodes of bliss is not so gloomy and melancholy as his imagination painted it, and that religion and cheerfulness are not irreconcilable foes. In short, such was the operation of prejudice in some, of bigotry in others, of ignorance amongst the unlearned, and of pride and of self-conceit amongst the learned, that an almost universal uproar took place amongst the people, whilst the names of the Sage and of his adherents were branded as the destroyers of the public peace and order, and as the misguided votaries of enthusiasm, of heterodoxy, and of all the novelty of visionary and pernicious opinions.

In the mean while it was curious to remark, that amongst the most violent persecutors of this excellent man, on account of his religious principles, there were several who themselves had no religion at all; and that of those who made profession of religion, there were some who had never perused a single page of his voluminous writings, and who had been heard to declare that they never would. Indeed, such was the unaccountable virulence operative on the occasion, that a favourer of the Sage's sentiments, howsoever pure and innocent his life, was held in greater detestation than the most abandoned and profligate characters, and that even the drunkard, the thief, and the adulterer escaped with less public censure than the devout christian, who, in compliance with the Sage's counsel, laboured to become perfect in the love of God and of his neighbour. Yet, terrible as the storm of persecution was, it did not extend its rage or vent its malice, either on the bodies or on the property of the persecuted, being providentially restrained by a law of the kingdom, which enacted, that

all should be tolerated in the free enjoyment and profession of their religious tenets, provided they did not disturb the public peace. The persecution, therefore (thanks to the law), did not lead either to the prison or to the faggot, as there is every reason to suppose it would have done, if unfettered by legislative authority. Nevertheless, its terrors with many were not less formidable, since it was a violent attack on the credit and reputation of the persecuted, by every possible mode of invective, abuse, and contempt, which is a punishment, in many instances, more dreaded than even the horrors of a dungeon, or the tortures of a burning fiery furnace.

When the rumour of these disturbances reached the ears of the Sage and of his friends, it produced amongst them different effects, according to the state of each individual mind. Some began to be alarmed about the Sage's security and their own, and almost to repent of their indiscretion in listening to the Sage's opinions. Others trembled for their reputation, and were willing to make a compromise with conscience, and to forego all their purposes of reforming the kingdom, if they might only be restored to the favour of the people, and regain their former credit amongst their neighbours and acquaintance. Others again, and these were principally of the clergy, were fearful about their temporal interests, from a dread of incurring the displeasure of their diocesan, and thus forfeiting all hope of future preferment in the church, if not of losing what they at present enjoyed. In the midst of these agitations, by which the minds of many of the reformers were assailed and shaken, the Sage alone remained calm and collected, and observing the effect produced on his adherents by the rumour which they had heard, after a pause of a few minutes he thus addressed them, with a view to support their drooping spirits.

I congratulate you, my Friends, on this trial of your faith and constancy, to which the Providence of God hath called you; for so it is that the Almighty explores and proves His children, that He may discover whether His

favour and good opinion, or the favour and good opinion of the world, have gained the ascendancy in their hearts. You have received with gladness the counsels which I have given you, and have believed them to be from God, because you have found them to be in exact agreement with the truths of God's Eternal Word. For I have not spoken of myself, but whatsoever hath been revealed to me, by and through the Sacred Scriptures, that I have spoken. My writings, therefore, are not to be regarded in any other light, than as expositions of the Word of God, in order to rescue the Holy Book from those false glosses and misinterpretations of men, by which the whole Christian Church is at this day misled and desolated. And I know that my testimony, in this respect is true, "because I have not sought mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." You also may be persuaded that I have declared the Truth, for you know that every doctrine which I have taught tends to exalt our Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, His Life, and His Kingdom in the hearts, in the understandings, and in the actions of men. And who cannot discern plainly that this, and this only, must be the Truth, since our Lord calls Himself "the Way, the Truth, and the Life?" (John xiv. 6.) Had I pressed upon you the worship of any other being than our Lord Jesus Christ, or called you to worship Him in any other way than by true repentance, and by a life according to His precepts of heavenly love and charity, you would then have had cause to suspect that I was misleading you by some devices of my own imagination. But since it has been my perpetual labour and endeavour to lead you to our Lord Jesus Christ, as He Himself would lead you, when He says, "Come unto Me;" (Matt. xi. 28.) "Abide in Me;" (John xv. 4.) and to teach you that you cannot come to Him but by forsaking your sins, and loving Him, and keeping His commandments, as He Himself teaches when He says, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" (Matt. iv. 17.) "If a man love Me, he will keep My words;" (John xiv. 23.) you may hence conclude

of a certainty, that my doctrine is not of my own imagination, but is grounded in the infallible Word of the living God. I have, indeed, cautioned you, and I ever shall caution you, and all mankind, against the terrible and false doctrines which, like so many locusts from the bottomless pit, are at this day devouring all Truth and Good in every country called Christian. For what Good and Truth can be expected to remain in the church, while men are taught to believe that they may be saved by reliance on the merits of Christ, without Repentance; and that the Saviour is not Himself the True and the Only God, but merely a second Person in the divine Trinity, offering Himself as a vicarious sacrifice for sin, to satisfy the justice of the first Person, and as a Mediator and an Intercessor to conduct sinners to another God besides Himself? Yet, reasonable and convincing as my testimony is, in all the above respects, I must be free to apprise you, that you will never fully discern its reasonableness, and be convinced of its truth, until your minds are brought into some inward trial and exercise concerning it. The Providence of God therefore, as I said, has permitted the present disturbances, in order to strengthen and confirm your faith, and you are thus called to experience all the blessedness which our Lord announced when He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." (Matt. v. 11.) Be not, then, afraid, neither be discouraged, but rather take up patiently and thankfully the cross which is to lead to a closer conjunction with your suffering Head. Let no resentment find any place in your bosoms, and if any sensation of the sort arises, learn to subdue it instantly by fervent prayer, agreeably to the divine precept, which teaches, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." (Matt. v. 44.) Let the nations rage together, and let the people imagine a vain thing; let the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed; but let us

break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us, (Psalm ii. 1, 2, 3.) cleaving steadfastly unto the Great Incarnate God, and labouring to purify our hearts and lives through His faith, His fear, and His love. Thus shall we best provide for the peace of our own minds and consciences, while, at the same time, by the purity and innocence of our conversations, we shall best recommend to others the blessed truths which have been found so salutary and consolatory to ourselves.

As the Sage uttered these words, a beam of celestial radiance darted from his animated countenance, and inspired the bosoms of most of those who heard him, with new confidence and delight. And they said (addressing themselves to the Sage), we are now convinced more than ever that thou teachest the Truth, and we are content to suffer every extremity of persecution, rather than to make shipwreck of our faith and of a good conscience. Thou hast taught us to love God and His Word more than anything else here below, and howsoever the world may hate us and despise us for so doing, we are determined, through Divine Aid, not to let go our hold of the Eternal Life thus brought near to us.

Nevertheless there were some, who were evidently over-awed by the fear of persecution, and who, on that account, manifested a secret inclination to turn their backs on the Sage and on his opinions, or at least not openly to profess their adherence to them. Yet inwardly in their consciences they were convinced that the Sage was to be credited, and that what he said was true, but "loving," alas! "the praise of men more than the praise of God," (John xii. 43.) they dreaded the avowal of their sentiments, lest they should suffer in their reputation. Amongst these was a clergyman of some rank in the church, and who was distinguished at the same time by his intellectual talents and literary fame. He had eagerly embraced the Sage's doctrines, and had been heard to declare in private, that they were incontrovertible, and in full agreement with Evangelical Truth. Yet such is the sad effect of receiving honour from

men, to the neglect of that honour which cometh from God, (John v. 44.) that though he still persisted in the same acknowledgment in his closet, yet he was as much afraid of being ranked publicly amongst the Sage's followers, as of being branded with the appellation of a liar, a thief, or an adulterer. So true are those words of the great Saviour, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.)

CHAPTER VI.

The Sage proceeds to instruct the Reformers on the subject of Good Works, and how necessary they are to promote man's Salvation; at the same time pointing out the extreme danger of supposing that *Faith alone* is saving.

THE disturbances excited throughout the kingdom in consequence of the Sage's opinions, together with the Sage's address on the occasion, had the desired effect to separate from the body of the reformers all those weak, unsettled members, whose minds were "divided between God and the world, and who, of course, halted between two opinions." For from henceforth a few who had before been zealous for the reformation of the kingdom, and who with this view had come to consult the Sage, now "looked back from the plough" to which they had set their hands, and seemed even ashamed that they had ever touched it. Nevertheless, a very considerable majority stood firm to their purpose, convinced alike of the Sage's superior wisdom, and of the necessity of endeavouring to disseminate its dictates in order to save the nation. They therefore continued their visits to the Sage, making light of the world's reproaches, whilst they were admitted to the high privilege of listening to, and imbibing his incomparable and heavenly counsels. Besides, they were anxious to hear his further explanation of the nature of Evangelical Religion, being very much struck with what they had already heard concerning the operation of the

Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the wills and on the understandings of men, and being desirous on that account to know his sentiments respecting the same Divine Operation as exercised on human actions. Accordingly, one day when they were assembled together, and had acknowledged with gratitude their obligations to the Sage for the very interesting and edifying information which he had given them on a former occasion, one of the reformers opened the conversation in the following words.

We are convinced, said he (addressing himself to the Sage), of the great superiority of your illumination, in the things of God, and having already received much both of instruction and of delight from what you have told us concerning the operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the human will and on the understanding, we should esteem it a particular favour if you would gratify our thirst after saving knowledge, by informing us what is to be understood by the same Divine Operation in its influence on *human actions*.

Human action, replied the Sage, is the result of human will and understanding, which result is necessary to give fixedness, extent, delight and usefulness to those spiritual principles, from which it proceeds. For without determination to action, the will and understanding would be floating, visionary, uninteresting, and useless faculties, and might be compared to the head and body of a man without legs and arms. God therefore in His adorable mercy, having created man for happiness and usefulness, hath created him also for action, and with this view hath given him both hands and arms, legs and feet, as well as a head and a body. With the same view He has insisted, in His Holy Word, on the indispensable duty of man's exercising the powers of action with which he is gifted, and of exercising them according to that same heavenly law of love and charity, of justice and of judgment, of sincerity and of truth, which is prescribed for the government of his will and the guidance of his understanding. Hence come all those various exhorta-

tions in the Sacred Scriptures to do the will of God, to bring forth good fruits, to be zealous of good works; Matt. vii. 19, 20, 21, 24, 26. Luke vi. 47, 48, 49. Matt. xiii. 9, to 23. Luke viii. 21. John ix. 31. Chap. xiii. 17. Chap. xiv. 14, 15 to 21. Chap. xv. 15, 16. Rom. ii. 13. James i. 22. Rom. ii. 5, 6. 2 Cor. v. 10. Matt. xvi. 27. Rev. xiv. 13. Chap. xx. 12, 13. Chap. xxii. 12. Jer. xxxi. 19. Hosea iv. 9. Zech. i. 6., and hence, too, it is declared so repeatedly that every man is to be judged hereafter and to receive a recompence according to his works. It is not, therefore, sufficient for man's justification and final salvation that he loves what is good, or that he knows and understands what is good, unless he also acts and practises what is good, when opportunity is given. And the reason is plain, because action and practice make a part of the man as much as his will and understanding, consequently, until the action and practice are brought into the same order, and submitted to the government and guidance of the same eternal principles with the will and the understanding, the man himself cannot be said to be wholly and entirely, but only half restored to the divine image and likeness, and, of course, cannot be said to be wholly and entirely but only half justified. In this unhappy case, what a strange and heterogeneous being must we suppose man to become, while one part of his constitution is subject to the law of God, another is subject to no law; and while in one part God is present, and rules, and communicates His blessing, in the other He is not allowed to interfere, either by His presence, by His authority, or by His peace! Can we possibly conceive that such a being can be completely happy, or at rest? For are not happiness and rest the results of Divine Influence and Operation? And how then can they exist in their fulness, where the Divine Influence and Operation is not allowed to exist in its fulness? When, therefore, the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ has taken possession of man's will and of his understanding, and produced in them its saving fruits, by filling them with all the

fulness of its own heavenly Goodness and Truth, it next descends further into the lower principle or degree of his life, called action, with intent to make him a perfect and complete man, and to replenish him with a perfect and complete blessedness. And this is what our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to pray for in these words of His Divine prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," (Matt. vi. 9, 10.) which words, it is observable, are in connection with, and immediately follow the two former petitions, "hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come," to instruct us yet further, that His name is most fully hallowed, and that His kingdom most fully comes, when we learn to do and to practice what is in the most perfect agreement with His most Holy Will.

Is it to be supposed then, said one of the reformers, that the Divine Word or Wisdom, in exerting its influence on human actions, changes entirely their external form, by calling man from the duties of his natural and temporal vocation, to the practice of other duties?

No, replied the Sage; for all men by education are initiated into the business and engagements of civil and moral life, some in one way and some in another, for the benefit of society. Thus, some are devoted to a profession, either of theology, of law, of physic, or of arms; whilst others are introduced to public usefulness in the no less honourable characters of merchants, manufacturers, husbandmen, mechanics, &c., with an endless variety. The Divine Word or Wisdom then, by its operation upon human actions, doth not change their form, but leaves them as it found them, in regard to their merely external practice; it only changes their internal qualities, by infusing into them new ends, a new life, and a new spirit, from the new will and the new understanding already formed in the regenerate mind. The true Christian, therefore, in submitting to the influence of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on his actions, does not conceive it necessary to forsake his station in society, or to retire from the discharge of the duties which that station

requires. On the contrary, he perceives that both his station in society, and the duties annexed to it, are the appointments of the Divine Providence for general good, and therefore he feels himself bound to the fulfilment of that station, and the discharge of those duties by the strongest and most sacred of all obligations. For the exercise of his charity, in this case, is not confined to a single and solitary object, such as an individual, whom he calls his neighbour, but it enlarges and extends its blessed operation towards a society of men, and even towards a society of societies, called a man's country, diffusing its useful energies to all around. The wisdom, too, of this unlimited charity teaches him, that the term neighbour is more applicable to a multitude of men, than to a single man, and that consequently he may be said to love his neighbour more by doing good to a multitude, than by doing good to an individual. But while he is active and industrious in the business and engagements of natural and temporal life, as if natural and temporal life was a'l that concerned him, he is ever watchful, with a most scrupulous attention, to connect all his exertions with spiritual and eternal ends. For this purpose he begins with removing from his heart and from his life all merely temporal ends, or such as regard only himself and the world, that so the love of God, and the good of his neighbour, which is the good of society, may guide and govern him in all his actions. Thus leading at once a civil, a moral, and a religious life, he connects virtue with piety, natural things with spiritual, temporal concerns with eternal, and all with God. His actions, therefore, are no longer like the actions of the merely natural man, defiled and defiling, meritorious in their end, unjust in their principles, inconstant in their execution, and mischievous in their consequences, but, being grounded in the Justice and Judgment, in the Truth and Equity of the Most High, they are those deeds wrought in God, (John iii. 21.) of which our Lord Jesus Christ speaks, by which He is glorified, the world is benefited, and the doer is justified.

Do you conceive, then, said the reformer, that a religious life is consistent with all a man's duties and engagements in society?

It is the error of errors, replied the Sage, to suppose otherwise, and perhaps this error has, more than any other, led into all the delusions of *solfidianism*, by which term I would be understood to mean a belief that man is justified by "faith alone," and that works are of no concern whatsoever in the article of justification. For when men once come to separate religion from the business of common life, they are presently led to suppose that it consists in mere acts of piety only, such as repeating creeds, singing psalms, uttering prayers, hearing sermons, conversing on serious subjects, giving alms to the poor, building hospitals, &c., forgetting, in the meantime, that the grand and pre-eminent design of all religion is, to lead man to a conscientious and faithful discharge of all relative duties arising from his connection with his fellow-creatures in a state of society. I do not mean to insinuate that the above acts of piety are of no account and that therefore they may be safely neglected; I only mean to say, that the principal branch of christian charity, and consequently the principal act of true religion, consists in the diligent and faithful performance of every office and function, every business and engagement, to which the Providence of God has called man here below. And since such performance never can be faithful, unless man be influenced by the fear and the love of God, and at the same time by the love of his neighbour, on every occasion, and in every transaction, therefore this love also is implied in such faithful performance. I likewise would be understood to insist yet further, that the natural corruptions of man's heart, as resulting from selfish and worldly love, can never be so clearly detected, and so completely eradicated, as by the activities of social life and its duties, as above described. For piety, separated from the exercises of charity, it is well known, nourishes selfishness, instead of destroying it, by building man up in the idea of his own superior merit and acceptance in

the sight of God. Whereas, when man is once taught to believe that his acceptance with the Deity depends altogether on his discharge of relative duties, from a pure and disinterested love and charity, in this case, every instance of such discharge tends to purify and strengthen the heavenly principle from which it proceeds, and thus perpetually to wean man from selfishness, and every idea of his own particular merit. Were I therefore to define the term *regeneration*, so frequently alluded to in the Sacred Scriptures, I would not scruple to call it a descent of the life and order of heaven into the lowest principles of man's mind and body, rendering the external man conformable to the internal, and both to our Lord Jesus Christ; sanctifying all the natural affections and corporeal appetites, by elevating them to a blessed conjunction with those spiritual and eternal essences from which they derive at once their birth, their energies and their bliss.

Is it to be understood, then, asked the reformer, that the doctrine of "justification by faith alone" is a dangerous and delusive doctrine?

If by "justification by faith alone," replied the Sage, you mean totally to exclude the operation of Charity and Good Works, as the term seems to imply; or if by "justification by faith alone," you would insinuate that Charity and Good Works have nothing to do in the matter of justification; then I would say that no doctrine can be more dangerous and delusive than the doctrine of "justification by faith alone." But if by "justification by faith alone," you mean to say, as perhaps many of the abettors of that doctrine conceive, that all the virtue and merit of justification are to be ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing at all to man, then I entirely agree with you, that the doctrine is just and true. Before, then, we can come to any solid conclusion on the interesting subject of justification, we must distinguish between what God has to do on the occasion, and what man has to do. Now with respect to God, it must be acknowledged that the original power of justification is all His, because man has no power but what is

derived from Him; and consequently all the merit of justification is His, because merit belongs alone to the Giver of power, and not to the receiver. But to insist, on this account, that man has nothing to do in promoting his justification, is to insist that he has nothing to do in religion, nothing to do in repentance, nothing to do in prayer, nothing to do in charity, nothing to do in good works,—thus it is to make him a stock or a stone, and not a man. As sure, therefore, as man is bound to use his own exertions in all religious acts, such as repentance, conversion, prayer, charity, and good works, so surely he is bound to use all his exertions in the business of *justification*, and so surely his justification, under God, is the result of all those exertions. Repentance, therefore, I do not scruple to insist, is a justifying work on the part of man, and the same is true of conversion, of prayer, of charity, and of its operations called good works; and for this plain reason, because to be justified, as the term implies, signifies to be made just, and man is made just before God, not by God's justifying power alone, but by his own coöperation with that power, in the exercise of all the above-named evangelical duties. Accordingly the Lord declares—"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," (Matt. xii. 37.) from which declaration it is manifest that man's words have in them a justifying principle, and tend to effect the work of justification, provided they be spoken in coöperation with God, and under the influence of His mercy, goodness, and truth. And if man is justified by his words, why may he not be justified by his works, provided they also, like his words, are from God, and not from himself? To ascribe, then, to faith alone a virtue, which belongs alike to repentance, to prayer, to charity, to good works, and to every other religious act performed from religious principle, which is the love of God, is to introduce mischief and disorder into the church, by assigning to a single grace (and that by no means a superior one, if we may believe St. Paul and St. James—1 Cor. xiii. 13, James ii. 17—26) an exclusive

excellence which belongs alike to every other grace. For what must be the necessary, yet terrible consequence of such exclusion, but this, that a principle of speculative faith will come finally to be depended on in the great concern of salvation, to the utter neglect of repentance, prayer, charity, and good works? And if repentance, prayer, charity, and good works are once neglected in the church, I would then ask, what of religion can remain, but mere form, and notion, and ceremony,—“a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal”? (1 Cor. xiii. 1.)

But I have been told, said the reformer, that the favourers of the doctrine of “justification by faith alone” exclude the efficacy of good works, lest man should take merit to himself in the business of his salvation, and thus detract from the all-sufficient merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I doubt not you have been told so, replied the Sage, but allow me to observe, that on the same ground the efficacy of faith, in the article of justification, ought to be excluded also, since it is not easy to assign a reason why man may not take merit to himself on account of faith, as well as on account of his works. Setting aside, however, this consideration, in regard to the merit of faith, I would ask, in respect to the merit of works, why is it necessary that a man should claim it? For is it not possible that a work may be done in humility and to the glory of God, and can any merit be claimed for such a work? It ought to be considered, too, that we are pleading in favour, not of works in general, but only of good works, and that no work can properly be called good, until all the glory of it is ascribed to God, consequently until all the merit of it is ascribed to the same Divine Source. All I therefore contend for is, that a good work must needs be a justifying work, since being “wrought in God,” (John iii. 21.) as our Lord Jesus Christ expresses it, and being done to the glory of God, without any view to establish human merit, it must needs have a tendency to justify man, or render him just, by extending more and more the kingdom of the Divine Justice in every principle both of soul and body.

But I have been told further, said the reformer, that the partisans of "faith alone" recommend both repentance and good works to their disciples, and insist that their faith produces both. Can it be said, then, that they exclude repentance and good works from their creed, when they urge that faith alone is justifying?

It is true, replied the Sage, that the partisans of "faith alone" do recommend to their disciples both repentance and good works, because they are aware that otherwise they should oppose at once both the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures and the common sense and reason of mankind. But while they appear to recommend those evangelical duties, it is evident that in reality they remove the high and holy sanction by which alone mankind can be led to practise them. For when they exhort their disciples to repentance and to good works, and at the same time tell them that repentance and good works are of no avail in the great business of their justification and acceptance with God, what is this but uttering in the same breath a mixture of commendation and discouragement, of exhortation and prohibition, of praise and censure? And what is the effect likely to be produced by such double-minded counsel on the lives of men? Will it not be said, and said justly, by every one who hears it, if "faith alone" be sufficient to accomplish the great work of my salvation and bring me to heaven, what occasion is there to trouble myself about repentance and works? I believe, and therefore I shall be saved; repentance and good works can add nothing to my sanctity; I will therefore be content with believing and leave repentance and works to those who are not so well taught as myself in the deep mysteries of salvation.

But the assertors of justification by "faith alone," said the reformer, insist upon it as a fundamental Scripture doctrine, that man is cleansed from sin solely by the blood of Christ. How then will you convince them that repentance and good works are necessary on man's part, to promote justification, when the Sacred Scriptures

assert that the blood of Christ is alone efficacious to that saving purpose?

I would ask them in this case, replied the Sage, what it is they understand by the blood of Christ. Do they conceive that by this expression is meant that *material* blood which was shed upon the cross? Or, do they suppose that the term was intended to involve in it all the merit and efficacy of the sufferings and death of the Redeemer? Or, lastly, do they interpret it as denoting some spiritual and living principle from our Lord Jesus Christ which the Sacred Scriptures call His blood? If they adopt the first of these ideas, by saying that the blood of Christ means only His *material* blood which was shed on the cross, I would then ask them, how it can be supposed that sin, which is a *spiritual* defilement, can be washed away by any thing *material*? Or, further, in what sense, or to what purpose, can such *material* blood be *now* applied to the sinner? But if they adopt the second or third idea, by saying that the blood of Christ involves in it all the merit and efficacy of the sufferings and death of the Redeemer, or that it denotes a spiritual and living principle from Jesus Christ, I would agree with them in each of these interpretations, but then I would again ask, how can the blood of Christ, according to either of these senses, be applied to a sinner for purification and justification, unless that sinner turns to our Lord Jesus Christ, and believes in Him? And how can a sinner turn to Him, and believe in Him without repentance? For to turn and to believe, according to a spiritual idea, must of necessity imply a change of the affections from the love of evil to the love of good. And what is a change of the affections from the love of evil to the love of good but repentance? At all events, therefore, repentance must surely be regarded as a justifying act, since without it, the blood of Christ cannot possibly be applied to the sinner, or, if applied, cannot possibly be efficacious. For how can any thing be of efficacy to promote man's justification and salvation, while he obstinately continues to love and to live in sin?

One of the reformers was proceeding to make other inquiries, when a loud knock was heard at the door, and a messenger was presently introduced with a letter in his hand, directed to one of the company. The letter came from the Bishop of a neighbouring diocese, and the person to whom it was directed was a clergyman in that diocese, and the rector of a large parish, who had long been in the habit of visiting the Sage and reading his theological writings. The purport of the letter was, to request that the clergyman would immediately appear before the bishop, as the latter had something very particular to communicate. What were the motives for this conduct on the part of the bishop, and what the conversation which passed on his interview with the reformer, may be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing an account of the causes which influenced the Bishop to send for the Reformer, and of the conversation which passed between them at their meeting.

It has already been shown, in a former chapter, what a violent outcry was excited in the kingdom against the Sage's opinions, and at the same time against every one who espoused them, without any regard either to the character or to the conduct, in other respects, of the accused party. It was offence sufficient that new religious ideas were adopted, and some old ones discarded, and no piety, no virtue, no integrity of life, no zeal for the salvation of souls, was deemed a sufficient counterbalance, to the terrible crime of asserting the liberty of private judgment, and pursuing steadily the path to which it pointed, in the great concerns of conscience and of eternal life.

In no instance was this remark ever more fully verified, than in the case of the clergyman mentioned at the close of the last chapter. He had accepted a benefice in the church, of small value, in a large and populous town,

where he devoted his talents, his time, and his labours to the service of God and to the instruction of the flock entrusted to his care. Always eager in the pursuit of truth, and especially of Evangelical Truth, he became early acquainted with the best theological writers, especially with the inspired ones of the Old and New Testament, and studied them with a devout affection, not only to inform his understanding, but at the same time to influence and regulate his will, his affections, and his life. Having thus acquired a competent knowledge of all the systems, of modern theology, and what was of still higher importance, having formed that knowledge into his life by suffering it to conduct him to the love of the Supreme Good, and to the practice of evangelical virtue, he providentially became acquainted with the writings of the Sage. From that moment he saw the comparative dimness of every other light, and admired every day, with increasing astonishment and holy gratitude, the superior brightness of that Wisdom, which unfolded to his delighted eyes the knowledge of God, of His Word, and of His Kingdom, in a manner so unexpected, yet so convincing and satisfactory. But on this occasion he thought it criminal to play the part of a miser, who delights in hoarding up his money for the gratification of his own avarice, rather than in communicating it for the benefit of others. Having found, therefore, what he conceived to be the treasures of the Eternal Truth, it was his daily prayer and continual labour to impart them to his neighbours, that they also might rejoice with him in the saving knowledge of the Most High. Accordingly, he delivered from his pulpit, for the instruction of his parishioners, the Heavenly Doctrines, which he had found so consolatory to his own mind, at the same time opening the doors of his house, for the reception of all who wished to hear a further explanation of those doctrines in private.

To a person unacquainted with human life, and with the impression which superior piety is apt to make on the minds of those who are disposed rather to envy than

imitate it, it may appear incredible, and even impossible, that a character of the above description should find enemies. Yet so it happened; and what is still more extraordinary, those enemies were formerly professed friends, so that in this instance was fulfilled what is written concerning perfection itself in a human form, "mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Psalm xli. 9.) And to such an extravagant pitch did their enmity carry them, that they were determined, if possible, to get the venerable object of it removed from his benefice, if not entirely discarded from his public ministry. With this view they agreed to write a long letter to the Bishop, filled with bitter accusations against the person, who by his piety had excited their indignation, and even charging the Bishop himself with inattention to his duty, because he had not before, of his own accord, silenced the mouth of such a *heterodox* teacher.

The Bishop (who was a man of distinguished piety and candour) received this letter with mingled surprise and concern, especially at finding that the charges contained in it were made against a clergyman, for whom he had entertained the highest respect and veneration. But it was impossible for him not to take cognizance of a business pressed with so much earnestness, and involving in it so many interesting consequences. Accordingly, as was stated in the last chapter, he requested an interview with the accused, which was readily acceded to, and as soon as the meeting took place, the Bishop thus began:—

I am sorry, Sir, to have found myself under the disagreeable necessity of sending for you, to appear before me as a *judge*, when it would have afforded me much greater satisfaction to have seen you as a *friend*. But I must be free to tell you that you have enemies, and by this letter it will appear that they are not likely to prove very placable ones. For they have urged against you very heavy charges, which, if well supported, may lead to serious inconveniences in respect to yourself. The

charges are these, first, that you deny a Trinity, and also the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, that you go about the country to disseminate your heretical opinions, and that you also open the doors of your house to admit young proselytes; and thirdly, that you read and circulate the writings of the Sage. I trust, however, that you will be able to vindicate yourself, and to satisfy me in regard to your innocence, in which case you will have nothing to fear. But since it is become necessary that I should hear your vindication, will you allow me to ask what you have to say for yourself in answer to the first charge, "a denial of a Trinity?"

My Lord, replied the Clergyman, I feel much obliged to you for the very candid and friendly manner in which you have opened this business, and I shall think it my duty to answer any questions you may propose, which are likely to make you acquainted with my sentiments, for I wish to conceal nothing from you. In regard therefore to the "sacred doctrine of the Trinity," which I am accused of denying, I do not hesitate to say, on the word of a Christian, that the accusation is altogether groundless, since I ever did, and I trust ever shall maintain that important doctrine, in agreement with what the Sacred Scriptures so abundantly teach on the interesting subject. But whilst I am bold to make this declaration, I am free at the same time to acknowledge, that the usual manner of conceiving of that doctrine is by no means in agreement with my own ideas respecting it. For it is generally believed concerning the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your Lordship well knows, that the Father is one Person, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another, and that each Person has a distinct office and character, the Father being called the Creator of the world, the Son the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. Now, it appears to me, that this mode of conceiving of the doctrine of the Trinity, has a direct tendency to introduce into the Christian world a dangerous *tritheism*, and to involve the minds of Christian worshippers in the most intricate

perplexity respecting the object of their worship. My idea therefore is, that the whole Trinity, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is contained in the one divine and glorified Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, as to His inmost hidden essence or soul, is Jehovah, the Eternal Father, as to His outward existence, or Body, is the Son of God, and as to His divine proceeding, or operation, is the Holy Ghost. Thus, there is only one God in the church, and Jesus Christ is that one God, in whom is a Divine Trinity, being *Creator*, from eternity, *Redeemer* in time, and *Sanctifier* or *Regenerator* to eternity. All Christians, therefore, as it appears to me, are bound to approach and worship this visible, manifested, redeeming and regenerating God, as He has taught them, and to worship no other God but Him. Pardon me, my Lord, for being thus free in delivering my sentiments.

I cannot possibly be offended, replied the Bishop, at your taking a liberty, which I myself requested you to take; neither can I be offended at the sentiments you express, which are in a great degree congenial with my own; for I never could bring myself to conceive of the Deity as existing under a *tripersonality*, according to the common idea of a Trinity of Persons in the Divine Unity. Will you, therefore, proceed to the second charge made against you, "the denial of the Atonement," and let me know how far this charge is well-grounded or otherwise? For, from what I have heard of your sentiments concerning the Trinity, I begin to suspect that your ideas on this subject also, have been much misunderstood and misinterpreted.

My Lord, replied the Clergyman, be assured that nothing can be more unjust and groundless than the charge, for God forbid that I should ever deny the Atonement made by the Great Saviour. Pardon me, however, if I again acknowledge, in this instance, as in that of the Trinity, that my ideas differ essentially from those which occupy the minds of Christians in general on this subject. For the common sentiment is, that the

Atonement consists in the reconciliation effected between God and man by the shedding of the blood of Christ upon the cross, and that in consequence of this blood-shedding the offended justice of God was satisfied; and sinful men were received again into a covenant of mercy. Now to this explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement I must beg leave strenuously and altogether to object, in the first place, because it supposes the merciful God to require such a satisfaction, and in the second place, because it takes no notice of the satisfaction which God really did require, and of the reconciliation between God and man, which was accordingly effected. For the satisfaction which God really did require was this, that man should repent of his sins, be converted to his God, and be saved from destruction; and that to accomplish these purposes, the *possibility* of repentance, of conversion, and of consequent salvation should be provided. This *possibility* was provided by all that our Lord Jesus Christ did and suffered in the flesh, for by His deeds and sufferings He combated and overcame the powers of darkness, and removed them from man, and by the same acts He glorified or made divine His human nature, through eternal union with the Divinity in Himself. Thus He diminished the powers of infernal evil, which before withheld man from drawing nigh to his God, and at the same time He increased and brought near the powers of heavenly Good in His Divine Humanity, which were now become necessary to enable man to combat and overcome his natural corruptions, and recover his lost life by conjunction with his heavenly Father. Such are my sentiments, my Lord, on the very interesting subject of the Atonement, and if they are at variance with your own, I must again request you will pardon the freedom with which I have delivered them.

I see no particular objection, replied the Bishop, to the ideas which you have stated, and which come recommended to my own mind by the consideration, that they were the ideas of an intimate and learned friend of mine, for whose opinion and sound judgment I must ever

entertain the highest respect. You will now proceed, if you please, to answer the third charge, which accuses you "of going about the country to disseminate heretical opinions, and also of opening the doors of your own house to admit young proselytes."

This, my Lord, is a charge, replied the Clergyman, which appears to take for granted what, I trust, has never yet been proved, viz., that my opinions are heretical. And yet, if it be heresy to worship our Lord Jesus Christ as the Great and Only God, and to shew my love towards Him by keeping His commandments, I confess myself to be a very great heretic. The single question then, in regard to the present charge, appears to me to be this, whether it be criminal in a minister of the Gospel to endeavour to disseminate in his parish the knowledge and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with this view to open the doors of his own house to admit converts? I trust, my Lord, I shall not be thought presumptuous in answering this question in the negative, and at the same time in declaring that I conceive it to be the duty of every clergyman, both in his own house and in other parts of his parish, to take every opportunity of impressing upon the souls committed to his care the strong conviction he feels in his own mind of the vast importance of that religious knowledge and obligation, which is to determine whether they are to live happy for ever hereafter in the kingdom of God, or miserable for ever in the kingdom of darkness. And in this view, my Lord, I think it is to be sincerely lamented, that the ecclesiastical laws of the kingdom do not allow the rector of an extensive parish that liberty of prayer and of preaching, which the common law of the land allows every dissenting minister, be his designs ever so mischievous, and his opinions ever so erroneous.

And while I am on this subject of ministerial liberty, may I be permitted to proceed in my defence against the third charge alleged in the letter to your Lordship, in which it is objected in the way of reproach to my character, that "I read and circulate the writings of the

Sage." For this charge, like the foregoing, seems to me to be an infringement on the freedom, with which a clergyman, in common with every other member of society, is vested, both by the laws of nature and of Providence, of perusing and circulating any writings, which appear to him calculated to instil religious and virtuous principles of life and conversation. And I trust your Lordship will give me credit when I most solemnly declare, that I conceive this to be the tendency of the writings in question, and that this consideration alone has influenced my whole conduct respecting them, I am not sure whether your Lordship be acquainted or not with the important subjects discussed in those writings, but I am well persuaded that if you would only take the trouble to peruse them, you would soon be convinced that what I say is true, because you would soon discover, from the manner in which every subject is there discussed, that their grand end and object is to restore the true Christian religion, by leading mankind to forsake their sins, to love our Lord Jesus Christ and one another, and to lead new lives in agreement with that love, and according to the precepts of the Gospel.

As the Clergyman spoke these words, he thought he perceived in the Bishop an inclination to put a stop to the conversation, and therefore begged his pardon for having intruded so long on his time and patience. But the Bishop, far from being offended, declared himself perfectly well satisfied with the information he had received, and added how much he felt himself obliged by the open and ingenuous manner in which it had been communicated. He then dismissed the Clergyman, only first cautioning him to be prudent and circumspect in his conduct, since it was very apparent that he had many enemies, and repeating his great concern that a business of so delicate and disagreeable a nature had ever been brought before him.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Sage's discourse on the nature and tendency of True Religion in effecting communication and conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ, and consociation with the angelic kingdom in all the three constituent principles of man's life, his will, his understanding, and his actions.

WHEN the conversation which passed between the Bishop and the reforming Clergyman came to be noised abroad, and when it was found that the latter retained his benefice, and was allowed to continue his ministerial labours as before, it was presently rumoured that the former was become a convert to the Sage's opinions. This, however, was not altogether the case, at least the Bishop never cared to make a public avowal of such sentiments; it was nevertheless very evident, that from the period of his interview with the reformer, he never manifested any disposition hostile to the cause of reformation, or tending at all to kindle the flame of persecution against it. In the meantime, the reformers took fresh courage from what had passed, whilst their enemies were proportionably intimidated and abashed. Accordingly the meetings at the Sage's house were continued with recruited zeal, and every step was taken by the members, which was most likely to give effect to the interesting cause they had espoused. Still, however, the Sage's ideas were but partially understood, and therefore one day, when the reformers were assembled, he was requested to continue his discourse on the nature of true Evangelical Religion, and particularly to explain that part of his definition, in which he had described "the tendency of that religion to effect communication and conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ and consociation with the angelic kingdom, in all the constituent principles of man's life, his will, his understanding, and his actions."

To this request the Sage, after a short pause, replied in the following words:—I lay more than ordinary stress on this part of my definition of true religion, and I also

wish you to do the same, not only on account of its real and weighty importance, but likewise because it is in general either entirely overlooked, or but slightly adverted to by theological writers. For the only encouragement usually held out to young converts in religion is the hope of being admitted into the kingdom of heaven at some future distant period, and of enjoying there an inconceivable degree of uninterrupted and eternal felicity amongst the blessed inhabitants. Nor have I any thing to object to this encouragement, so far as it goes, because the hope of being introduced even *hereafter* into heaven, must needs prove a powerful stimulus to the practice of evangelical virtue, with every well-disposed mind. All I contend for is, that this encouragement ought not to be proposed as the *only* encouragement to a religious life, because there is *another* presented in the Gospel, and pressed upon man's attention and acceptance, which, in my opinion, greatly exceeds it, and is entitled therefore to pre-eminence. The encouragement I mean is the hope, yea the certainty, of a *present* and *immediate* admission into heaven, by means of communication and conjunction with the God of heaven, and of consociation with its blessed inhabitants. Observe, I do not say that this latter encouragement supersedes the former, or is in reality separate from it. I only mean to say that it excites a more lively interest in the affections, because it is a nearer and more present reward, and therefore differs from the former only as a near and present good differs from a remote and future one. And that this idea is in exact agreement with what the Sacred Scriptures teach on the subject, is evident from what our Lord Jesus Christ so frequently inculcates, that "the kingdom of God, or of heaven, is nigh and at hand," (Matt. iii. 2. Chap. iv. 17. Chap. x. 7.; Mark i. 15.) and, indeed, so nigh as to be "within" man; (Luke xvii. 21.) and also from what the apostle intimates to his Hebrew converts, where he tells them (though they were yet in a body of flesh) that "they were come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and

to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.)

But what are we to understand, asked one of the reformers, by communication and conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ? Are communication and conjunction the same thing? Or do you mean to express by those terms distinct ideas?

Communication with our Lord Jesus Christ, replied the Sage, is not the same thing as conjunction, because communication is opened by knowledge, whereas conjunction is effected by love; in other words, communication is of the understanding, but conjunction is of the will. Every man, therefore, who reads the Sacred Scriptures and meditates on what he reads, has communication with our Lord Jesus Christ, because he has communication with the Eternal Truth which proceeds from Him, and which is in perpetual connection with Him, as its Divine Source; but no man has conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ, until his life is affected by what he reads, that is to say, until his love is affected, and he begins to devote himself to Him as the Supreme Object of his joy; for all spiritual conjunction is of reciprocal love, and is attended with reciprocal delight. Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, speaking of such conjunction, and from His great love soliciting it, says to His disciples, "abide in Me, and I in you;" (John xv. 4.) and in another place, "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him;" (John vi. 56.) to instruct them in these *three* most important truths, *first*, that the end of all His precepts is to lead His followers to conjunction with Himself; *secondly*, that this conjunction between Him and His church, and every member of His church, is effected by love, since without love no one can either "abide in our Lord Jesus Christ or eat His flesh and drink His blood;" and *thirdly*, that it can only be effected by reciprocal love, expressed by the mutual abiding or dwelling of our Lord Jesus Christ in His disciples, and of His

disciples in Him. It is then the peculiar privilege and happiness of the true believer to enjoy at once all the unspeakable benefits and blessings resulting both from communication and conjunction with the Supreme Fountain of all Life and Love, Wisdom and Purity, Protection and Peace. For by the knowledge of the Eternal Truth communicated to, and operative in his understanding, he has perpetual access to the Divine Presence, manifested and beaming forth in the Divine Humanity of the Glorified Saviour, while by the same knowledge communicated to, and operative in his will, he is made sensible of the attractive influences of the Divine Love, drawing him into the closest bond of grateful and affectionate connection with its Eternal Father and Source. Thus every step he takes in the ways of repentance and of regeneration, every bright perception of heavenly Truth opened in his understanding, every beam of celestial Good warming and invigorating his will, every combat against his corruptions and every victory over them, every good action performed to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-creatures, tends to bring him nearer to his God, and to put him in possession of the blessed, the astonishing realities of salvation, resulting from communication and conjunction with the Infinite and the Eternal. He is more convinced therefore by *this inward evidence*, than he could be even by miracles, or the rising of one from the dead, of the true power of religion, and he finds, to his unfeigned joy, that the love of God is not the gloomy, melancholy thing which some people suppose, but that on the contrary, it is an inexhaustible fountain of the brightest hopes, of the most serene peace, of the most uninterrupted cheerfulness, of the most enduring gratification. Thus he is no longer allured to fulfil the duties of religion, by the prospect only of attaining a *future* reward, and by the expectation of admission into a *future* heaven, but finding the fulness of a *present* recompense in the heaven already opened in his humble and penitent mind, he gives God perpetual thanks for having rendered religion instrumental in open-

ing such a heaven, and in communicating so much real happiness to mankind.

But may it not be objected, asked one of the reformers, that according to your idea of *reciprocal* conjunction between our Lord Jesus Christ and His church, you make salvation to depend in some degree on man, by making it the result, not of Divine power alone, but of human power in connection with the Divine?

This objection, replied the Sage, falls immediately to the ground, when it is considered that the *reciprocal* power exercised in this case by man, is primarily from the Divine Power, and is nothing else but the Divine Power communicated to man, in like manner as "the branch of a vine" (John xv. 2.) (the figure presented by the Lord of the reciprocal conjunction we are speaking of) possesses no power of its own but what it derives from the parent vine. Every enlightened Christian therefore will acknowledge, and acknowledge freely and willingly, that he has no power of his own but what he receives from above, and that all his reciprocal power of conjoining himself with his Saviour God is from Him, and not at all from himself. Yet with this acknowledgment he will see the absolute necessity of using the power as his own, because he will discern, that unless it be so used, it can never be instrumental in effecting that reciprocal conjunction with God for which it is given; just as every wise man will see the necessity of opening his eyes to behold the sun's light, although he be fully convinced that the power to open his eyes is not properly his own, but of God.

I think I begin to see clearly, said the reformer, what you mean by communication and conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ, and by its reciprocity, and I am inclined to believe that my brethren also are as well satisfied as myself with what you have said on the subject. Will you now have the goodness to explain further to us what we are to understand by "consociation with the angelic kingdom," which is another effect, as you describe it, of the operation of the Word or Wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on the wills, the understandings, and the actions of men?

Consociation with the angelic kingdom, replied the Sage, or, what is the same thing, consociation with angels, follows, of course, from what has been already said, concerning the tendency of true religion to open communication and effect conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ. For He and the kingdom of His blessed angels can never be put asunder, or separated from each other, and consequently, whosoever hath communication and conjunction with the former, must needs enjoy consociation with the latter. This subject, indeed, has been lost sight of in the Christian world, even more than the foregoing, and yet there is none of higher importance to be well understood, and none also more fully supported by the testimony of Divine Revelation. The reason why it has been lost sight of, is owing principally to that corruption and sensuality of the human mind, at this day, which dispose it rather to earthly, than to heavenly consociation, and which thus incline it to believe the things of this world to be both more real and more blessed, than the things of the heavenly world. For where this spirit prevails and operates, a removal from angelic consociation is the immediate and necessary consequence, since all spiritual consociation is of the love-affection, and therefore, if the love-affection be earthly, so will also the consociation be; and *vice versa*, if the love-affection be heavenly, the consociation will be heavenly also. Hence it is that the Sacred Scriptures represent all the families of mankind here on earth, and all the individuals who compose those families, in some state of connection and association with the invisible beings of another world, according to the ruling affection of love and of life, by which such families and individuals are influenced. The impenitent and thoughtless are therefore described as being in close confederacy with the powers of darkness, called the Devil and Satan, and so linked in society with them, as to make a one, because the ruling affection of love and of life with persons of such a character, is in entire agreement with the ruling affection of such evil and miserable beings. On the other hand, the penitent,

the converted, and the wise Christians are described as being one with the angelic host, and linked with the blessed angels in the closest and most indissoluble bonds of amity, of peace, and of protection, inasmuch as they are united in love-affections, and consequently in the same ends of life, in the same pursuits, and in the same practices. It is accordingly written of the righteous, that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them, and delivereth them;" (Psalm xxxiv. 7.) and of the angels, that "they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" (Heb. i. 14.) whereas it is written of the wicked, that "they are of their father the devil, and that they do the works of their father;" (John viii. 41, 44.) and of the devil himself "that he goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter v. 8.) Nothing can be more full and more clear than the testimony of Revelation on this very important subject, and yet nothing can be more plain than that both the fulness and clearness of this testimony are at present almost entirely lost sight of, and consequently are become of none effect amongst mankind. To recover therefore the force and the authority of the Word of God on this very interesting point, and to convince men that there is a Heaven and a Hell, and that all mankind are in the closest connection with the one or with the other, according to their affections of love and of life, it hath pleased our Most Merciful Lord to open the eyes of my spirit, and to enable me to see (and this now for a period of many years) the different societies in both kingdoms, and to perceive also how every individual human being on earth is in connection with the one or with the other; with the societies of heaven, if his life be directed by the Truth of heaven, but with the societies of hell, if his life be under the guidance of his own intelligence separate from such Truth.

Are not you afraid, said one of the reformers, of making this confession before an unbelieving world, which is so little disposed to give credit to such supernatural communications?

I cannot say that I am afraid, replied the Sage, because no man ought to be afraid of confessing what is true. At the same time I am well aware how much this confession will expose me to the ridicule of unthinking men, and perhaps, even you, my friends, who are more disposed to serious reflection, will not be inclined to give me full credit for all my assertions. But whatsoever may be the consequences to myself, I cannot but declare the things which I have *seen, and heard*, knowing in whom and in what I have believed, and that nothing is contained in my testimony and experience, but what is in perfect agreement with the testimony and experience of the inspired penmen. Mine enemies, I know, call upon me to work miracles in attestation of the truth of what I have related; but can they give me or themselves any sufficient security that they would believe the miracles so wrought, and not impute them to magic or to an infernal agency? Can they also answer for themselves that in spite of such miracles they would not "dance round the golden calf" (Exodus xxxii. 19.) of their own concupiscences, as the Children of Israel did, after witnessing the extraordinary miracles wrought in the wilderness; or join in the cry of "Crucify him, crucify him," (Luke xxiii. 21.) as the descendants of that people did, after beholding the mightier signs and wonders wrought by the Incarnate God? Besides, if they want miracles to convince them, what, let me ask, can be a greater miracle, than that a man like myself, whilst encompassed with a body of flesh and blood, should be enabled to see the great invisible realities of another world? But I am fully persuaded that it is not a deficiency of evidence which causes unbelief, but a deficiency of inclination to give credit to any information which opposes the passions, and contradicts the senses. Nevertheless, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear;" (Ezekiel ii. 5.) whether they will believe or disbelieve, approve or condemn, I shall feel myself compelled by the highest of all obligations, the obligation of conscience, to speak the truth; and, whatsoever it may cost me,

whether the loss of reputation, or of honour, or of life, to conceal nothing from the world of what the world is so much interested in knowing. Accordingly, in my various writings I have testified to the world, and I now testify before you, that there is a heaven, and that there is a hell, and that all mankind are in close consociation with the inhabitants of the one or with the inhabitants of the other of the two kingdoms, according to their lives; the righteous with the angelic inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom, and the wicked with the infernal inhabitants of the hellish kingdom. I also testify (for I have seen it), that men continue to live as men after death, only with this difference, that they then live, not in a material body, but in a spiritual body, which spiritual body is precisely in the same human form with the material body, and is endowed precisely with the same senses. And lastly, I testify, that no man is admitted hereafter into heaven out of mere mercy, neither is any one condemned to hell from the want of mercy, but that every man is admitted hereafter into heaven, in proportion as by a good and wise life in this world, he has entered into consociation with the angelic inhabitants of heaven, and that every one is cast down into hell, in proportion as by a wicked and a thoughtless life, during his abode on earth, he has plunged himself into a miserable confederacy with the spirits of darkness. For after death every one goes to his own, or to his like.

As the Sage uttered these words, his countenance was irradiated with a beam of mild benevolence which indicated at once the spirit of Truth from which he spake, and the zeal with which he yielded obedience to its dictates. The reformers were forcibly struck both with his aspect and with his manner of speaking, and for a time made no reply. At length, after a silence of some minutes, one of them ventured to ask, whether spiritual communication with the inhabitants of another world, similar to what the Sage had described, was to be expected to take place in the Church and amongst its members.

To this question the Sage made answer, that spiritual communication and conjunction of life with our Lord Jesus Christ might certainly be expected to take place, whensoever the Church was married to Him her true Husband, but not till then. At the same time consociation with the Angelic Kingdom would as certainly be effected, because such consociation is implied in such communication and conjunction. Nevertheless, added he, it is not to be expected that the members of the Church will have their spiritual eyes opened, as mine have been, to behold the great realities of another world, for this, so far from answering any good purpose, would tend rather to do mischief, by exposing both to delusion and danger. It is sufficient for the Church to be guided by a spiritual rationality, derived from a right understanding of the Sacred Scriptures, which is a far safer and higher guidance than any that could result from open converse with spirits and angels. Under this guidance too, she may know and be inwardly convinced, that so long as she continues faithful to her true Husband, our Lord Jesus Christ, and endeavours to form her life according to His Divine Precepts of love and of charity, so long she is securing and improving her consociation with the angelic host; and every repeated act of penitence, of piety, and of charity, tends to open a more interior admission into heavenly societies. Thus she may have the consolation to believe, that as "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," (Luke xv. 7, 10.) so there is joy likewise in the presence of the same angels over every member of the church, in proportion to his successive advancements in the regeneration. And I leave you, my Friends, to judge what a powerful encouragement this consideration must hold forth to the Church, to advance towards perfection in a religious life, whilst she believes and is persuaded, that every step in such advancement gives joy to the blessed inhabitants of heaven, secures their friendship and their protection, and at the same time unites her in the closest bonds of love, of confidence, and of peace with the heavenly societies.

Do you conceive then, said one of the reformers, that a belief in spiritual consociation is an essential article of faith, in order to conduct to purity of life and practice?

I do not conceive, replied the Sage, that it is an essential article, but I insist that it is an advantageous one, because it presents more powerful motives to shun sin, and to cherish holiness, than can be presented without it. For instance, tell a young man that the criminal indulgence of his passions will expose him to misery hereafter, and he will probably be little affected by the threat of such a distant and unseen punishment. But tell him that his criminality will have an immediate tendency to drive away the angels of heaven from their association with him, and at the same time to link him in close confederacy of purpose, of mischief and of misery with the powers of darkness, and you will be far more likely to check his sinful career, by working far more powerfully on his affections and thoughts. In like manner, if you wish to encourage a young person successfully to the love and to the practice of holiness, what can be conceived to be a weightier argument on the occasion, than a just representation of the nature of the spiritual consociation of which we are speaking? Abstract reasoning on the beauty and on the excellence of moral virtue, and on the deformity of vice, will, I fear, produce but little effect. But endeavour to convince your young disciple, as the Gospel would convince him, that Evangelical virtue is a real, substantial, and angelical form, and that in proportion as he cherishes it, it will implant its form in him, and not only so, but will likewise consociate him with similar angelic forms of heavenly beauty and bliss in the eternal world; in this case, if there be a single spark of good affection, or a single ray of true illumination in his mind, you will have secured your point, because you will have suggested a motive to holiness which is absolutely irresistible.

But in the present age of scepticism and unbelief, said one of the reformers, when so few people are disposed to believe any thing which is above the sphere of bodily

sense, may it not be difficult to convince them of the truth, respecting the existence of angels and of devils, and especially of their nearness and influence?

It may be difficult, replied the Sage, and it certainly will be difficult to produce conviction, unless there be a previous disposition to admit the authority of Revelation, and a previous illumination of mind in consequence of such admission; but in cases where the authority of Revelation is submitted to, and the mind has attained to any consequent illumination through the light of the Eternal Truth, I should conceive that all such difficulty will vanish, and that mankind may be led to acknowledge the existence and the influence of spiritual intelligences upon an evidence, equal at least, if not superior, to that which compels them to allow of the existence of material substances. For Revelation teaches that there is such a Being as God, and that there are such beings also as angels and devils: Revelation likewise unfolds to us many particular properties and qualities appertaining to God, to angels and to devils. Hence we acquire, what we could not otherwise have acquired, an idea of a God, of an angel, and of a devil. But let me ask, how could such ideas ever have been either suggested or acquired, unless a God, an angel, and a devil had first existed? For whence could the idea come, but from the being itself of which it is an idea? It was never known that a man formed an idea of what hath no existence, neither can it be conceived possible for such an idea to be formed. He may indeed, in his imagination, combine together a great variety of images, and from that combination may acquire an idea of something which never existed but in his imagination; as for instance, he may combine the head of a horse with the tail of a cow, and the body of a lion with the tusk of an elephant, and thus in his idea frame a monster, which is the mere creature of his own fancy. But then it deserves to be noted, that in such a combination, all the parts of which it consists, as the head of the horse, the tail of the cow, the body of the lion, and the tusk of the elephant, are taken from

objects which really exist, and consequently are not the mere creatures of imagination. And if the parts are thus derived from real existences, so must also the whole be, which is formed of those parts. The result then of my argument is this, that every idea of a thing implies the existence of the thing of which it is an idea, and consequently the idea of a God implies the existence of a God, the idea of an angel the existence of an angel, and the idea of a devil the existence of a devil. I would add too, and on the same ground of evidence, that every idea of a spiritual existence implies the presence of that existence. For as in the case of bodily sight, it is impossible to see an object, unless that object be present or presented to the eye, in like manner, in spiritual sight, which is that of mental imagery, it is impossible to form an idea of an object unless that object be at the time presented or present to the mind's view. The existence then and the presence of spiritual beings, it is plain, rests on the same evidence with the existence and presence of material substances, only with this difference, that the evidence in the latter case is applied to the bodily senses, whereas in the former it is applied to the mental perceptions. But why, let me ask, is not mental perception as much to be depended upon as bodily sense? We know that in many instances the bodily senses deceive us, and we correct their conclusions by the superior judgment and perception of the mind. I insist then, that the being and presence of God, of angels, and of devils, are as fully established as the existence and presence of the sun, the moon, and the stars. For all the evidence which we have in the latter case, rests solely on the testimony of our bodily senses, whereas in the former case it rests on the testimony of our mental thought, idea, or judgment, which is far more to be depended on, because it is grounded in the infallible documents of the Eternal Truth revealed in the Word of the Most High. I do not expect, however, that the unbeliever will be convinced by this way of reasoning, since he rejects the Revelation in which it is grounded; but I am persuaded

that it will be found both consolatory and edifying to the devout and humble Christian, by enabling him to discern that in every thought or idea of God, he has an infallible proof, not only of the existence, but also of the presence of that First and Best of Beings; and that also in the thought or idea of angels and of devils, he has a demonstration equally certain that both angels and devils exist, and that they likewise are continually present, and exerting either their blessed or their cursed influences on mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

The Sage's final Advice, with a view to the Restoration of pure Evangelical Religion in the Kingdom.

THE reformers, from the conversations which they had lately held with the Sage, began to be more and more convinced every day of the heavenly purity of the principles, and of the superior brightness of the wisdom, by which his whole life and conduct were regulated. They could not help therefore regarding him as one peculiarly appointed of the Divine Providence, to be a signal instrument of blessing to mankind, by recalling them to the paths of righteousness and peace, and thus laying again the foundations of a Church, which being founded on our Lord Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone, and on the observance of His Divine precepts of love and of charity, might attain eternal conjunction with that Great Redeeming God and His Kingdom, and finally prevail over all the powers of hell and of darkness. Encouraged by this persuasion, they took more frequent opportunities of assembling at his house, that they might collect the whole of his counsels, and digest them well in their own minds, with a view to disseminate them amongst the people. One day, when they were thus met, and had asked the Sage's opinion concerning the shortest and surest mode

of restoring pure Evangelical Religion in the kingdom, he addressed them, after a brief and solemn pause, to the following effect.

You have, doubtless, all of you read the Book of the Revelation made of old to the beloved Apostle John, and you know, and every one may know from a diligent perusal of that wonderful Book, that it contains the history of the Christian church at the present period of its consummation. (The successive corruptions of the church the Lord predicted in Matthew chap. xxiv.) But it does not stop here; for it then proceeds to disclose such an astonishing interposition of the Divine Mercy and Providence in favour of a sinful world, as was never before exhibited on this earth, except in the instance of the manifestation of God in the flesh. I allude to the descent of the New Jerusalem, recorded in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of that mysterious Book, which, according to the interpretation of the best commentators, has reference to some New Dispensation of heavenly Truth and Doctrine from God, to restore His fallen church, and to become that blessed and glorious Tabernacle, of which it is written in the third verse of the twenty-first chapter,—“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God;” for God, you know, dwells in His own Truth with man, and He cannot dwell in any other habitation. According to the best commentators too, the period for the accomplishment of this Divine prediction is near at hand; but no commentator has ever yet presumed to say that the fulness of time is now come, when God, for his elect’s sake, as He hath promised, will shorten the evil days, and take to Himself His great power, and build again the Tabernacle of David which is fallen down. Yet this assurance I now take upon myself to give in the face of the whole world, or to speak more properly, it is allowed me to give this assurance, and to confirm it by the most convincing of all testimony, the testimony of Truth.

Do you mean really to say, asked one of the reformers, that the New Jerusalem is at this time descending from God out of heaven, and that the Tabernacle of God is at this time about to be established amongst men? If so, tell us by what signs we may discover the happy event, and by what evidence we may confirm it.

I do mean to say, replied the Sage, that the New Jerusalem is at this time descending from God out of heaven, and that the Tabernacle of God is at this time about to be established amongst men, and if you will carefully peruse my writings, you will see all my reasons for saying so, which I am persuaded will be perfectly satisfactory to all who are seeking earnestly to know and to do the whole will of God, but to none else; because "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. xii. 10.) For the principal points of doctrine insisted upon in my testimony are these, first, that the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ is a Divine Humanity, being one with, and containing in it all the "fulness of the Godhead" (Coloss. ii. 9.) called the Father, and therefore is to be approached and worshipped, as the only Medium of access to the Father. Secondly, that the Sacred Scriptures contain an internal spiritual sense, perfectly distinct from the letter. Thirdly, that Charity, Faith, and Good Works, ought not to be separated, because they tend conjointly to man's justification, which cannot be effected by any one of them singly. Fourthly, that evil ought not to be done, because it is contrary to God, but that good ought to be done, because it is of God, and leads to God. Now if I can make it appear, that the marks and characters of the doctrine of heavenly Truth which you have received from me, and which, I assured you, was not mine, but derived from the Word of God, and revealed to me whilst I was perusing the Holy Book—if I can make it manifest, I say, that the marks and characters of this doctrine answer, in every particular, to the marks and characters of the above Holy City and of all its parts, then surely a most conclusive and satisfactory evidence will hence be derived in

favour of my testimony on this most interesting subject, which evidence none can controvert but those who are disposed to dispute the testimony of all sober and serious truth whatsoever.

We shall be most eager, said the reformers, with one voice, to hear what you have to say on the occasion, and we shall be most happy to be convinced by it.

I shall begin, continued the Sage, with the first mark and character of the Holy City, as it is described in the second and ninth verses of the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, where it is said to be "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and where it is called "the bride the Lamb's wife." Now it is evident that this mark and character is, in no respect whatsoever, applicable to a city constructed of wood and stone, yet it must be equally evident, that it is in every respect, applicable to the doctrine of heavenly Truth derived from the Word of God, and particularly to the doctrine which I have repeatedly taught you, concerning the Divine Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this Humanity is perpetually called a Lamb in the Sacred Scriptures, and the Bride and Wife of this Lamb therefore must needs mean all those, who are either being conjoined or are already conjoined with that Humanity. A Church then is here predicted, which will have conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ, by and through that Humanity which He glorified, or made Divine for that very purpose, that it might become the blessed Medium of effecting such conjunction. But in what period of the world did such a Church ever exist? In what period of the world, too, was such a Church ever announced, except in the present, through the instrumentality of my writings? It is evident then, that in this respect, there is a manifest agreement between the doctrine which I have been the instrument of promulgating, and the Divine Prediction concerning the Holy City called "the bride the Lamb's wife."

A second mark and character of the Holy City, which is alike applicable with the above to the doctrine

of heavenly Truth, delivered in my writings, but not to a city of wood and stone, occurs at the third verse of the twenty-first chapter, where it is written—"behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," &c. For God does not dwell with men in a city, but in the doctrine of Truth and of life derived from His own Word, and stored up by faith and love in the hearts and in the understandings of His people, agreeably to those words of the Lord, where it is written—"If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) The true Tabernacle of God therefore, is a humble, penitent, and believing heart, which receives and keeps His Holy Word, in charity, faith, and good works, in other words, in will, in understanding, and in action, according to what I have repeatedly taught you on this interesting subject; and there it is that sooner or later "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," &c. (Rev. vii. 17.; xxi. 4.)

Again; it is written of the Holy City, that it "had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." (Rev. xxi. 12.) But what enlightened eye cannot discern that these marks and characters, like the foregoing, are more properly applicable to the doctrine of heavenly Truth derived from the Word of God, which you have received from me, than to any city considered merely as a city. For what can be the meaning of "twelve angels" being "at the gates," and of names being written thereon, "which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel," if by the gates here spoken of are meant merely the gates of a city? Whereas if these gates are regarded in their proper and spiritual signification, as denoting those holy and heavenly Truths, derived from the Word of God, and made known in my writings, which introduce to the holy and heavenly City, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, then it may with the strictest reason and propriety be said that "twelve angels were at the gates, and that names were written

thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel," because those Truths, as I have shewn, are ever in connection with the whole angelic heaven, signified by the "twelve angels," and with all that is wise and good in the universal church on earth, expressed by the "names of the twelve tribes of Israel."

Again, it is written, verse seventeen, that "he measured the wall of the city, an hundred, forty and four cubits, the measure of a man, that is of the angel." But, let me ask, what possible sense or meaning can be annexed to the "measure" here spoken of, if it be supposed to apply only to the wall of a city, such as is seen here on earth? The measure is first called "an hundred, forty and four cubits," and then it is immediately said, that this is the "measure of a man, that is, of the angel," which, according to all natural calculation, cannot be true. To reconcile then this passage with common sense and sound reason, we are compelled to have recourse to its spiritual interpretation, which can neither be difficult nor doubtful, if it be recollected what has been already said concerning the signification of this mysterious City. For taking it for granted, that by the "City, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven," was intended to be expressed a Revelation from God of the pure doctrine of heavenly Truth derived from His Holy Word, then by the wall of this city will be signified the protection, which that Truth affords against all the false principles of evil and error, originating in the kingdom of darkness, which might attempt to destroy it. For every one knows that the wall of a city is for the defence and security of its inhabitants, in this case, therefore, for the defence and security of the principles of Love and Charity, which are the divine and heavenly principles dwelling in all Truth. Here then may be discovered, by the intelligent mind, the full force and strict propriety of the measure here spoken of, as being "an hundred, forty and four cubits, the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." For the measure of a man, and of the angel, spiritually speaking, is the quality of a man and of the angel, and the quality

of a man and of the angel is the full and complete conjunction of heavenly Good and Truth, since it is this conjunction alone, which properly constitutes both the angelic and human character, as is abundantly proved in my writings. This measure, therefore, is here applied to the "spiritual protection" spoken of on this occasion, because all spiritual protection from the powers of evil and error arises solely from the above conjunction.

Much more (continued the Sage) might, if needful, be urged on this very interesting subject, all tending to prove, that by the "descent of the holy city New Jerusalem from God out of heaven," was intended to be *figuratively* expressed a Revelation from God of that pure doctrine of heavenly Truth, derived from His Holy Word, which I have already delivered to you, and which is to constitute the blessed "tabernacle of God with men." (Rev. xxi. 3.) But enough, I trust, has been said to shew, that the time is come when the Scripture shall be fulfilled, where it is written, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xix. 7.) Wherefore, my Friends, if you ask my advice concerning the re-establishment of true Evangelical Religion in the kingdom, I would give it you in the following words, and may the blessing of the Almighty God attend it!

Go forth amongst the people, in the power and strength of that Truth which descends from the Glorified Jesus, and which is now revealed through His most Holy Word, and tell them, that "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride," (Isaiah lxii. 5.) so this Great and Blessed God rejoiceth over them, and calleth them, with the voice of His infinite and adorable Love, to come into the arms of His everlasting mercy and loving kindness. Teach them therefore to believe, that this is both the time and manner of His "Second coming," which He was pleased to predict,

and which, it is manifest, is in close connection with the descent of the "New Jerusalem," and not intended, as some suppose, to destroy the earth, but rather to save it, by renewing its inhabitants in the blessed spirit of His own most pure Love and holy Truth. Accordingly, after announcing the "holy city coming down from God out of heaven," it is presently added, at verses 7 and 12 of the 22nd chapter of the Revelation, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Proclaim thus aloud throughout the world, that our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Divine Humanity, is now made manifest as the High and Only God of heaven and earth, and that, by and through this Humanity, He willeth that all men should henceforth approach Him, and attain everlasting communication and conjunction with Him, of life, of love, of blessing, of protection, and of salvation.

Point out continually this gate, this principal gate, of introduction into the Holy City, and say unto all who enter in by it, that they will enjoy the inestimable privilege of becoming "the bride, the Lamb's wife," because the Lord is emphatically called a Lamb as to His Divine Humanity, and therefore all who are conjoined by love with that Humanity, will be admitted to the distinguished honour and happiness of such a "Heavenly Marriage."

Teach them, therefore, to believe that the glory of the New Jerusalem Church will greatly exceed the glory of all former churches, because, approaching immediately to our Lord Jesus Christ in His Glorified Humanity, and acknowledging Him to be one with the Eternal Father, it will be delivered from all perplexity as to the Object of its worship, and will, at the same time, attain to a clearer and more just knowledge of the One Triune God, His mode of existence, and the nature of His operation.

Hold forth, at the same time, the encouraging consideration, that this "glorious tabernacle," in which God is now about to "dwell with men," is constructed solely

of the pure and blessed truths of God's most Holy Word spiritually, rationally, and naturally understood, loved and practised, and is not founded at all on the traditions, doctrines, and tenets of men, which have no higher origin than self-derived intelligence. "The wall of the city," therefore, is said to have "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," (Rev. xxi. 14.) to shew that it is grounded in all the sublime verities of the Gospel dispensation, and that hence it derives its strength, its security and its protection. These "foundations," too, are said to be "garnished with all manner of precious stones," because "precious stones" are the exact "corresponding figures," in outward nature of the above verities, when they are opened and operative in the devout mind, according to their internal spiritual signification, as they stand connected with the Divine Truth, and thus with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moreover, "the street of the holy city" is said to be "pure gold like unto clear glass," (Rev. xxi. 18.) and therefore you may add this further encouragement to all who are called to enter and walk in the blessed abode, that they will be put in possession of the Good of all celestial love and charity, signified and expressed by "gold," and that, by virtue of this Good, every bright intellectual Truth derived from the Word of God will acquire a transparency, signified by "clear glass," so that through it will be seen the great realities of the Eternal World, together with the beneficent and life-giving countenance of that Great and Holy Jesus, in whom it originates.

And that the ineffable beatitude of this heavenly City may make its full impression upon the minds of all to whom it is proclaimed, so as never to be erased, you may urge also, with all the force of celestial eloquence, this striking mark and character of its magnificence and splendour, that "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23.) For "the glory of God" is the bright radiance of the interior truths of His most Holy Word, which radiance is the Divine

Truth itself, and since all spiritual light is from the Divine Truth, and this latter is in continual close connection with the Divine Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom it proceeds, therefore you may invite all into the Holy City, under the animating hope and belief, that this glorious and consolatory light will be their continual guide and most faithful director, through all the perplexities and troubles of this lower world, until they enter upon the superior comforts and more enduring realities of a higher and purer state of existence.

But you must not be contented with exhibiting this portrait only, of the glory, blessedness, and magnificence of the Holy City, since, if you stop here, you may allure many to seek admission within its walls, who are by no means in a state of life capable of entering into its purities and enjoying its peace. To encouragement, therefore, you must add caution, in all your addresses to the people, if you ever hope to succeed in your beneficent designs of reforming them, and of laying the foundations of the New Jerusalem. For this purpose you must sound perpetually in their ears these words of exclusion from the above tabernacle of God, where it is written—"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.) And under the holy sanction and high authority of these words, you must put them upon their guard against all their natural corruptions and errors, both of will, of understanding, and of practice, and especially against those two principal and radical evils, self-love and the love of the world, which are the fruitful sources of every defilement, abomination, and lie. You must thus conduct them into the ways of true repentance, purification, and regeneration, laying the axe to the root of every tree of pride and vanity, of covetousness and sensuality, of wrath, envy, malice, revenge, and every other anti-christian enormity, calling at the same time, to their recollection, that the spirit of the blessed Jesus is loving and merciful, humble and lowly, patient and contented, compassionate and forgiving, and that it can only dwell with

such as are, in some measure assimilated to it. Thus, by guarding them from every thing that defileth and worketh abomination, you will guard them at the same time, from every thing that worketh a lie, since a lie, in this case, has reference to all those false doctrines and erroneous opinions, which blind and mislead the minds of those who are not seeking in sincerity to be thoroughly renewed in the Divine image and likeness of the Great Saviour. The infidelity, therefore, which is disposed to believe nothing but what is evidenced by the senses; the superstition, which confounds the operations of nature with those of spirit; the bigotry, which denies salvation to all who are not of its own opinion; the enthusiasm, which forsakes the infallible guidance of the Word of God, to follow the delusive suggestions of disorderly spirits, either in its own mind or in those of others; the solfidianism, which seeks to be saved by speculative principles of faith, separate from charity and corresponding practice; the predestinarianism, which, rejecting the doctrine of free-will, makes God a merciless tyrant, and man a mere machine; all these spiritual lies, and every other deceived and deceiving imagination of the human understanding, will be totally expelled from the minds of those who are happy enough to seek and to find an asylum from all error, in the bright light of intellectual Truth, which shines continually within the blessed walls of the New Jerusalem.

And here I must beg leave to press an additional caution against the prevailing heresy of the times, which separates Charity, Faith, and Good Works from each other in the great business of salvation, and thus would put asunder what God hath joined together by an indissoluble bond of unity and of usefulness. Labour, therefore, earnestly to impress on the minds of the people, and to engrave in indelible characters, the indispensable necessity of combining, both in principle and in practice, these three essentials of Christian life and Christian regeneration. And to give the greater strength and fuller effect to that combination, you may add; also a

fourth essential, viz., the Lord Himself, by endeavouring to show, that both Charity, Faith, and Good Works are all of them from the Lord, connected with the Lord, and alike conducive to open and form the kingdom of the Lord in the human mind and life; and that if all or any of them be separated from each other and from the Lord, they cease to be alive, yea, cease to be anything, and, of course, cease to have existence. In all your addresses therefore to the people, never lose sight of these four saving essentials, and their conjunction; and to add to your words on the occasion their proper weight of authority, you may compare those essentials to the four sides of the Holy City which, on that account, is described as being "foursquare, the length being as large as the breadth." (Rev. xxi. 16.) And you may then ask the interesting question, how it can be supposed that the city should be a city without the combination of its sides; or if one side be separated from the other, how could the other be supported, and stand firm, and what would be its use? In like manner you may urge, that it is absolutely impossible to separate the Lord, Charity, Faith, and Good Works, those four co-equal and co-existing sides of the Tabernacle of God in man, without destroying the Tabernacle itself, and rendering all its sides insignificant and useless.

And, now I am on this very interesting subject, allow me to press upon your attention, and to request you to urge upon the people, as the best and most perfect rule of heavenly life, the observance of the decalogue, or ten commandments which you will find recommended and enforced in those remarkable words at the 14th verse of the 22nd chapter of the Revelation, where it is written— "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." You perceive manifestly from these words, that the divine blessing is announced not on believing only, but on doing, and on doing His (that is God's) commandments. You are to instruct the people therefore, that if they ever hope to attain conjunction of

life with our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the sum and substance of all true blessedness, they must be careful, above all things, to practice the precepts of the decalogue, recollecting the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, where He says—"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.) And that your exhortations may have the greater effect, you must endeavour to explain, in an easy and familiar way, in what manner the ten commandments lead to conjunction of life with God. With this view you must teach the people that the first two of the ten commandments enforce an acknowledgment of God, and also the love of that First of Beings in preference to every created being, and that they likewise inculcate the worship of Him, not by bowing down before the graven and molten images of mere human devices and doctrines, which have no higher origin than man's self-derived intelligence, but by submitting to and being guided by the sublime and holy verities contained in the Revealed Word of His own most pure Love and enlightening Wisdom. You are further to teach how the third commandment next enforces the worship of the Divine Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with a profound veneration for His Most Holy Word, inasmuch as these two, viz., the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Word, constitute the name of Jehovah God in the truest and most proper sense of the term. And since our Lord Jesus Christ is called, as to His Humanity, the Son of Man, and the Son of Man is declared to be "Lord also of the sabbath." (Mark ii. 28; Luke vi. 5.) therefore, you may add to your instruction, that the remembrance of the sabbath day, inculcated in the fourth commandment, in its supreme or highest meaning, has reference to that Great Redeeming God, as the six days' labour, agreeably to the same meaning, relates to his combats against the "powers of darkness," and to the similar combats of all His true disciples who follow Him faithfully in the regeneration. You may then point out the eternal conditions insisted on in the concluding commandments, as the requisites for attain-

ing the above rest of holy conjunction, viz.:—"Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet," &c., by which prohibitions, you may instruct the people, are described and forbidden all the ways and means of destroying, of defiling, of diminishing, and of traducing the life of love and of charity. You may, therefore, encourage your hearers to the practice of these conditions, by teaching them, that in proportion as they reject from their hearts and lives all malice and hatred, which is the true murder, they will attain conjunction with the Lord, in His own spirit of Love and Charity; in proportion as they reject defiled thoughts and affections, which are the true adultery, they will attain conjunction with the Divine Purity; in proportion as they reject unfair and dishonest dealing, which is the real theft, they will attain conjunction with the Divine Justice and Uprightness; in proportion as they reject insincerity and disregard to truth, which is the proper false witness, they will receive from God the blessed spirit of His own Rectitude and Sincerity; and lastly, in proportion as they reject selfish and worldly covetousness, they will receive from God the blessed spirit of a Divine Contentment, by being convinced that in conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ and with His Life, they possess every thing that they can possibly want for their enjoyment and bliss. Thus will the faithful practice of the Ten Commandments never fail to introduce to the Tree of Life and to the Holy City, because the Lord is that Tree, and His Truth is that City, and whosoever, out of a pure heart, abstains from the evils forbidden, cannot fail to attain everlasting communion with Him and with His eternal Truth.

I am well aware that some people attempt to evade the force of this reasoning in favour of the Ten Commandments, by urging the case of the Ruler, as it is recorded in Luke, chap. xviii. 18 to 24, and in Mark, chap. x. 17 to 23, to whom the Lord said, (notwithstanding the man's declaration that he had kept the Com-

mandments) "Yet lackest thou one thing." For on the authority of this example they insist loudly, that it is possible for a man to keep the Commandments, and yet to be wanting in something essential to his salvation, and that "faith alone, in the blood and merits of Christ," is that one thing needful. But surely this comment on the case in question is by no means admissible, especially when it is considered on what testimony the fact rests, that the man had kept the Commandments, and that this testimony was not the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, but of himself alone. The fact therefore, appears to be this, that the man had kept the Commandments in the letter, but not in the spirit; thus in the letter he had worshipped God, he had observed the Sabbath day, he had honoured his father and his mother, he had not been guilty of murder, of adultery, of theft, of false witness, or of covetousness, but then he had not done these things in the spirit, that is to say, according to their spiritual meaning and intention. He had not, therefore, worshipped the Incarnate God, he had not had respect to that God as the Lord of the Sabbath, he had not honoured his spiritual father and mother, he had not abstained from spiritual murder, spiritual adultery, spiritual theft, spiritual false witness, and spiritual covetousness. Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, points out this lamentable defect, and also its remedy, in those awful and instructive words—"Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, take up the cross, and follow me;" by which words He manifestly intended to teach the man, not only that the degree of his obedience to the Commandments was defective, but also in what it was defective, and that the deficiency could only be supplied by doing that in the spirit, which he had hitherto done only in the letter, that is to say, by renouncing his own will, signified by selling all that he had and giving to the poor, by combating his concupiscencies, signified by taking up his cross and by worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ as God in His Divine Humanity, signified by follow Me.

There is now only one point more, continued the Sage, about which I feel earnest to counsel you, and that is a point of very great importance indeed towards obtaining the perfection of Christian life and practice, and thus towards building up, in its due strength, proportion and beauty, the Holy Abode of the Most High. The point I mean is the necessity of enduring trials and temptations, and of gaining the victory in all such spiritual combats against the powers of the devil, the world, and the flesh. These trials and temptations, you know, are frequently spoken of in the Evangelical Scriptures, under the general name of "the cross," which every Christian is called "to bear," in conformity to the example of the suffering Redeemer. Yet, alas! in the Christian world, at this day, both the cross and its benefits are almost entirely lost sight of, and little understood, notwithstanding the positive assertion of our Lord, that "whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Him, cannot be His disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.) It must be your task then, my friends, to restore "the cross" to its pristine dignity and most eminent usefulness, by convincing the people to whom you address yourselves that it is still, and must ever continue to be, the only secure path to glory and happiness, because it is still, and must ever continue to be, the only certain process by which the natural obduracy of the human heart can be softened and subdued, the infernal powers of sin and of darkness successfully combated and effectually removed from man, and by which, at the same time, the powers of heaven, which are the powers of heavenly Love, Purity, Humility, Wisdom, Peace, and Well-doing can be implanted, made permanent, and rendered operative and fruitful in His life and conversation. But in vain will you preach the wholesome doctrine of the cross, unless you connect with it some strong encouragement to "bear it patiently," since it is so directly opposed to all the natural propensities of flesh and blood, and, consequently, so terrible in its aspects to the mere children of this world, who are led by those propensities.

The Sacred Scriptures, throughout, abound with such encouragements, but perhaps there is no one passage in the Holy Volume, which presents a greater, than what may be found in the words almost immediately following the annunciation of the descent of the "New Jerusalem," which are these, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. xxi. 7.) Can any words speak more forcibly, instruct more emphatically, or animate more powerfully? Go, then, and proclaim aloud throughout the kingdom this Divine language, and awaken every sleeping Christian to the combat against his corruptions by the consolatory reflection, that if he sincerely looks for Divine aid in it, such aid will be afforded him, and when such aid is afforded him, he will "overcome," and when he overcometh, he will "inherit all things," because he will inherit every Divine blessing, favour, grace, consolation, and protection, by conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ according, to the solemn declaration of that Great Saviour "I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. xxi. 7.)

And now, my Friends, added the Sage, I have only to commend you to the grace and protection of the Almighty, who is able to "give you a mouth and a wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist, (Luke xxi. 15.) and a support and strength which none can oppose, in the arduous work to which He has been pleased to call you. Look, then, continually to this Divine Assistant, and depend for success more on the power of His Arm, than on any energies of your own. Remember the simplicity of the Gospel which you have to preach, that it is "repentance, faith in the Incarnate God, and His second advent, and a life according to His precepts," and let no consideration whatsoever warp you from this simplicity, until you have impressed it deeply on the minds of all your hearers. Remember, however, at the same time, the encouragements, by which this Gospel is sanctioned and supported, and let those encouragements be the continual subject of your addresses to the people. Tell them, therefore, all that you have heard

concerning the "glory of the holy city of the New Jerusalem," and make them see and feel what you tell them is no cunningly devised fable of your own invention, but is in deed and in truth the "Word of the Living God," the prediction of an Infinite Wisdom, which can neither deceive nor be deceived, and the adorable appointment of as Infinite a Love, which knows no bounds in its blessed provisions for the restoration of the happiness and eternal interest of its creatures. Assure them, at the same time, that this prediction must of necessity be accomplished, and that it is even now being accomplished here on earth, and that "blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. xix. 9.)

As the Sage uttered these words, a holy awe fell on all those who heard them, and they cried out spontaneously, as if impelled by one spirit, and united in one harmonious voice, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David," &c. (Luke i. 68—80.) They then took their leave of the Sage, after first thanking him for all his pious instructions, and promising that, through the Divine Grace and Mercy, nothing should be wanting on their parts to communicate them to the people, and not only so, but that, by setting them an example of heavenly life and conversation, they would endeavour to conduct them to the gates of the New Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X.

The happy Effects which the Sage's Instruction produced in the Kingdom.

Not long after the conference, of which an account was given in the last chapter, the reformers commenced their ministerial labours, by calling upon the people to repent and believe in the Incarnate God, whose high and holy name is JESUS CHRIST, and in the fulfilment of His

promise to descend and be present, by His holy life and spirit, in His "beloved City the New Jerusalem." And as they preached this Word of Eternal Truth and Salvation, the power of the Lord was with them, and blessed them, and the Word was received by the people with exceeding great joy, and they wondered at the things which they heard, and were especially delighted to learn that their God and Saviour was so near them in His Divine Humanity, and that they could thus draw nigh unto Him without perplexity as to the object of their worship, and entering in by this door into the sheep-fold could "go in and out, and find pasture," (John x. 9.) agreeably to His most gracious promise.

It was a high gratification also to be instructed in the interior spiritual sense of the Sacred Scriptures, and to discover thus how those Holy Records were eminently distinguished from all other writings whatsoever, being, as to their letter and history, the mysterious continents and receptacles of the Divine Will and Wisdom of the Most High in the closest and fullest union. They saw, therefore, and saw with delight, that in perusing the blessed Volume, they conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and that every precept presented to their view was in connection with that Great God, and tended to open and to form, in the humble and penitent mind, the heavenly Kingdom of His unutterable mercy, love, truth, blessing, peace, and security. The happy consequence was, not only that the Book of Revelation was regarded by them every day with increasing love and veneration, but also, that its blessed truths, like seed sown in "good ground," were received every day with a more devout affection, and sprang up, and grew, and bare fruit, "some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold." (Matt. xiii. 8.)

Nor was it a subject of less consideration and delight, that they began every day to be more convinced of the great realities of the invisible world, while they were instructed by their teachers, both as to its nearness, and as to the influences from the inhabitants of that world,

ever operative on their minds. They saw thus, with an interior perception amounting to demonstration, that all mankind are in the closest connection either with spiritual intelligences, or spiritual insanities, the good with intelligences in heaven, and the wicked with insanities in hell, and that without such connection, man could neither think nor be affected, but must instantly become a lifeless corpse. The happy effect of this perception was, that they began to feel a secret dread and abhorrence of every impure thought and desire, and of every evil disorderly action, knowing from what source it proceeded, and how it tended to link them in a miserable confederacy with the "powers of darkness," and to close against them the gates of heaven and of bliss. On the other hand, it was an inexpressible consolation and encouragement to them to be persuaded, that every pure desire, every enlightened thought, and every good work, had an immediate tendency to open the doors of the Kingdom in which it originated, and to admit them to eternal association with the blessed inhabitants. Thus tracing both good and evil to their respective invisible origins, they were taught, better than by a thousand moral precepts, to "love the one, and hate the other, to hold to the one, and to despise the other." (Matt. vi. 24.)

But in no instance was the instruction of the reformers found more efficacious in promoting the purification and regeneration of those to whom it was addressed, than in what they taught concerning the human will, understanding, and actions, and concerning the necessity of the union of all those three principles to restore in man the Divine image and likeness. For by this doctrine the people were taught plainly what they had to depend upon in the great work of their salvation, and consequently what was the measure of their duty, as grounded in the requirements of the Divine Law. They no longer, therefore, carelessly trusted in the "merits and blood of Christ" alone to save them, but seeing that what God principally requires of man is purity of will, illumination of understanding, and rectitude of action, (since these

three excellencies embrace all the principles of man's life) they laboured to become perfect in each of these three constituents of their being and of their bliss. The Love of God and of their neighbour was thus their governing concern and rule of conduct, because this was chiefly conducive to the first of those constituents. The Wisdom of God had the next claim upon their attention and observation, because this was conducive to the second. And the Operation of God, in like manner, demanded their further consideration and care, because this was conducive to the third. By these means they were soon rescued from the terrible delusion of separating charity, faith, and good works; and making it their constant prayer and most zealous labour to purge their wills from selfishness, their understandings from error, and their actions from mischief, they cherished the Life and Spirit of heaven and its God in every vital principle of soul and body.

And it was equally wonderful and delightful to observe the effects, which sentiments and practices like these produced on the politics, the sciences, the arts, the occupations, the education, the marriages, and the recreations of this people. For civil policy was now no longer regarded as a cunning stratagem to monopolize prosperity in favour only of one kingdom of the earth, at the expense of others, but was rather considered and acted upon as a wise plan of co-operation with the Divine Providence of the Most High God, for the purpose of extending peace, protection, and blessing to all countries and kingdoms on the face of the globe, and of combining the benefits and interests of all in one common link of mutual dependence, communication, accommodation, and good will, for the general good.

The sciences, in like manner, were cultivated, not with a view to the aggrandizement of the fame or gain of the individual only who studied them, but to increase the common stock of useful knowledge in the world, and above all to make known and to exalt the Wisdom and Glory of the Great Creator, by confirming, illustrating,

and extending the sublime documents of Revealed Truth and Wisdom.

The arts too were practised with a view to embellish society, to humanize mankind, to increase the comforts and accommodations of life, to exercise ingenuity, to bring down upon earth the beauties, elegancies, and conveniencies which prevail in the heavenly societies, and thus, under the influence of heaven, to promote general benefit and usefulness, not to pamper luxury, nor to administer to pride and vanity, refinement and prodigality.

The same salutary effects were visible also in the occupations of the people, of all ranks, conditions, and circumstances; for priests delighted to minister in holy things, out of zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls; judges exercised justice and judgment from the pure love of those heavenly and eternal principles; soldiers were loyal and courageous, because the law of God inculcates both courage and loyalty; merchants, manufacturers, and husbandmen, in all their concerns, were guided and governed, not so much by the sordid love of gain, as by the rules of equity and uprightness, connected with the general benefit of society; even mechanics and labourers felt the influence of religious principle in all their employments, and were sober, diligent, and industrious, that they might please God, and prepare themselves for His Eternal Kingdom.

It was highly gratifying, likewise, to observe how the spirit of education was affected by the reformation which had taken place; for parents were no longer so anxious to instruct their children merely in worldly sciences and accomplishments, and in what is commonly called "good breeding," but they were careful to instil into their tender minds solid maxims of religious Truth, with a view to secure that eternal happiness for which they were born, and for the attainment of which they (the parents) were the guarantees under God. On the same principle, peculiar attention was paid to their marriages, to guard against the operation of those sordid and sensual passions, which, when suffered to predominate in this

holy institution, so frequently prove the bane and poison of all its joys. The youth, therefore, of both sexes were taught, at an early period of life, to regard the conjugal tie as most holy and sacred, and to believe it to be, not only in connection with, and under the immediate influence and blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also an exact type and figure here below of that Most Holy marriage which subsists between that Redeeming God and His Church. The happy consequence was, that marriage was soon restored amongst the people to its pristine purity, sanctity, innocence, and blessedness. A similar improvement took place in their recreations, which now, like their marriages, education, and occupations, were conducted on religious principles, and directed by the rule of that Wisdom, which requires that the body should be refreshed and recruited for the sake of the soul, and the soul for the sake of God.

Thus was the condition of this favoured people happily amended by the labours of the reformers, and by the blessed doctrines of heavenly Truth and purity, which were every where inculcated. For religion was now become their "highest delight," which was before their most "grievous burden," because they now served God from a principle of love and of freedom, and not, as formerly, from fear and constraint. A religious spirit, therefore, accompanied by a religious joy, descended and diffused itself into all their affections, thoughts, words, and actions, and by degrees took possession of their whole man, both internal and external, so that they were without what they were within, and in each principle holy, wise, and good. Even their common business and recreations partook of the blessed influence, and whether they eat or drank, or whatsoever they did, the glory of God was the first object of their concern, and their communication and conjunction with that glory was the second. Piety thus, and the fear of God, were no longer confined within the walls of the temple and of the closet, neither was the worship of the Divine Being made to consist in the mere repetition of prayers and the chanting of praises, for the

people were as devout, as pure, and as sincere in their houses, in their fields, and in their shops, as when on their knees before the altar, because they saw that the service which God requires, and with which He is principally delighted, is that of an upright life, and of a just and conscientious discharge of relative duties. Not that they neglected those more immediate acts of devotion, both public and private, which the law of God imposes on all Christians, as so necessary to keep alive the spirit of religion, and preserve its holy fire from being extinguished. Every returning Sabbath, therefore, found them eager to attend the temple-service, to celebrate the praises of their God, to supplicate His mercy, to hear His Word, to learn the lessons of salvation from His ministers, and to receive at His altar the nourishing food of Eternal Life. Every morning and evening too found them on their knees, pouring out their hearts before their Heavenly Father, confessing their secret sins, imploring His divine forgiveness, requesting the continuance of His protection and guidance, abased in humiliation, elevated in thanksgiving, patient in tribulation, and seeking the friendship, the favour, and the blessing of heaven, as things of infinitely higher value than all the wealth, and glory, and pleasure of the world. Thus did this people live, at one and the same time, a spiritual, a rational, and a natural life; combining grace with nature, eternity with time, heaven with earth, devotion with business, spirit with body, and all with God. Whilst, therefore, they were in the world, they lived above it; whilst their feet were treading on the dust below, their heads were soaring aloft on celestial eminences; and whilst their bodies were busied in association with men on earth, their minds held sweet converse and communication with angels in heaven, eating their bread, breathing in their atmosphere, partaking of their joys, and preparing to enter eternally into their happy abodes.

It is not, however, to be understood that this people, with all their purity of life, and sanctity of character,

were exempted from the common trials and troubles incident to human nature, or that they did not feel the pressure of human sorrow to which they were thus exposed; for this would be to suppose them angels and not men. Indeed, they themselves were well aware, that such an exemption would have been contrary to the designs of a most merciful Providence, and would rather tend to impede, than to promote that process of purification and regeneration, which, there is every reason to believe, is continued amongst the children of God, during every period of their sojourning here below, even to the close of life. But if they were still made sensible, by living experience, of the Truth of those words of their Redeemer, "Ye shall weep and lament; in the world ye shall have tribulation." (John xvi. 20, 33.) They were made sensible, also, of the Truth of those other words, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy; in Me ye shall have peace." (John xvi. 20, 33.) Thus they discovered that the tendency of all their trials and troubles was to increase their joys, by conjoining them more and more with our Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine peace, and this consideration led them to embrace every cross, as permitted of heaven for further purification, and to promote finally a greater fulness of bliss. Even the inward temptations, which still arose from the "powers of darkness" working in their natural corruptions, together with the spiritual struggles and combats resulting from that fruitful source of human misery, a rebellious will, were regarded by them as all under the control of a Divine hand, and "working for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Thus they were taught to preserve their souls in a Divine patience, under every event of life, howsoever apparently afflictive, from a conviction that it was not fortuitous, but providential, and consequently that, containing in it the most tender mercy of God, it ought to be viewed as a real and eternal blessing. On this occasion, it was a common saying amongst them, that "holy sorrow has a manifest advantage over unholy joy, since it has nothing to lose,

and everything to gain; whereas unholy joy has everything to lose, and nothing to gain."

Another remarkable effect of the doctrine of the reformers was manifest in the removal of all envy, covetousness, and discontent from the hearts of this people. For these bad passions, it is well known, arise from a sense of the superiority which others enjoy, in regard either to talents, or to property, or to birth, or to bodily perfections. But this people were taught, that in regard to talents, all mankind are equal in the sight of God, since all have alike the talent of knowing and of loving God, which talent is so infinitely above every other talent, that the most splendid and brilliant powers of human intellect bear no comparison with it in excellence, in blessedness, in the object of its views, in the extent of its research, or in the dignity of its end. They were taught the same lesson of equality as to property, birth, and bodily perfections, since it was continually inculcated by the reformers, that whilst the love of God opens to all those who are happy enough to feel its influence, a fruitful source of unbounded possessions, it confers on them, at the same time, a nobility of birth and a copious store even of sound bodily health, and bodily beauty, infinitely exceeding all that is called great and excellent, in those respects, amongst men. It was absolutely impossible, therefore, that a people so instructed, and so educated, could feel their minds corroded either by envy, by covetousness, or by discontent; because, opening their eyes to the reception of the Divine Wisdom, and their hearts to the reception of the Divine Love, they must of necessity discover, that in these eternal principles they possessed all the talent, all the property, all the nobility of birth, and all the bodily perfection, that any other person either can possess, or could reasonably wish to possess. Besides, they were taught to believe further, in a communion of all excellencies, by virtue of which communion every individual is made partaker of all the benefits resulting either from the talents, the property, the birth, or the bodily perfections of others, God having so appointed

things in the order of His Providence, that the happiness of every one shall depend, not so much on what he himself is, and possesses in himself alone, as on what he is and possesses in communion or society with others. They distinguished well, therefore, between a Good, and the reputation of a good, and they constantly insisted that the former is common property, and that the latter only belongs to the individual. And since every real good must needs be supposed a greater thing than the reputation of it, they were, therefore, content to want the latter, from a full conviction that, agreeably to the appointment of heaven, they completely possessed and enjoyed the former.

But of all the effects wrought by the power of True Religion in the reformation of this people, none was more signal, none more edifying, than the temper and spirit in which they viewed sickness and the approach of death, two evils so terrible to the impenitent, the unconverted, and the irreligious. For it is a well known fact, that no consideration whatsoever affects the mere natural man with so tremendous a pang, as the thought of sinking into the grave, and quitting the "warm precincts of the cheerful day," to be laid (as he supposes he must be) in a cold tomb, and there to sleep till the general resurrection. And indeed, if this was a true representation of the case, that dying men are preparing to be laid in such a tomb, and to sleep there so long a sleep, it is not easy to conceive a more alarming and fearful idea. But it was the peculiar happiness of the people of whom we are speaking, that their conceptions both of sickness and of death were of a far more cheerful and consolatory nature. For they had been taught to regard both the one and the other under the double character of apparent evils and real goods, and therefore they saw nothing terrible in them but their aspect, while their essential meaning, use, and end presented views the most animating, composing, and blessed. The truth is, that this people having been accustomed, during their abode in the world, to live above the world, and by faith and love

and good lives, to hold consort with the blessed inhabitants of another world, saw clearly, by an inmost perception in their own minds, that death is nothing else but the putting off of that material covering of flesh and blood, which serves to detain the imprisoned spirit, or real man, from open association with, and full enjoyment of those beings with whom he has intercourse and communion, and that immediately on the removal of that covering, the regenerate spirit enters into a new world, to enjoy eternal fellowship with its beatified inhabitants. Sickness consequently was viewed in the same satisfactory light, because sickness is nothing but the harbinger of death, in this case, therefore, the harbinger of life, of heaven, and of immortality. Under the influence of such sentiments as these, it is not to be wondered at, that this people met both death and its harbinger always with tranquillity, and without dismay, and frequently in triumph, since they perceived that the end of both was to introduce them immediately into the open possession and full blessedness of that invisible world of departed spirits, for which their life on earth had been a preparation, and into which their inner or real man had already been elevated, through conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ. In them, therefore, was accomplished the blessed prediction of the Prophet,—“O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction;” (Hosea xiii. 14.) and also the triumphant expostulation of the Apostle—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. xv. 55.)

Such then were some of the happy effects, produced by the Sage's instructions in this favoured kingdom. The people loved God, and kept His Commandments, and delighted in the order of His blessed Kingdom — They also loved one another, and endeavoured to manifest that love by a faithful discharge of social duties. Husbands loved their wives, and wives their husbands. Parents loved their children, and children obeyed their parents. The clergy were zealous for the salvation of the souls of their congregations, and the congregations

loved and honoured their clergy. Masters were kind and tender to their servants, and servants were faithful and trust-worthy to their masters. The king and his ministers watched over the best interests of the people, and the people, in their turn, were loyal in their attachment to their sovereign and guardian. Religion was respected, the laws were obeyed, science was cultivated, the arts flourished, and the people were happy. Nothing was feared but sin, and even the pain attending this fear was moderated by that love which casts out fear. All the disorders, which usually disturb the peace of society, such as adultery, murder, theft, drunkenness, and every other vice, fled and hid their hideous faces, wheresoever the doctrines of the New Jerusalem were received, and became operative. And on the other hand, all the virtues, such as chastity, brotherly love, honesty, sobriety, industry, &c., lifted up their holy heads and flourished. In short, it might be justly said of this people, as it is written on another occasion, "happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD;" (Psalm cxliv. 15.) and in them was fulfilled the glorious prophetic annunciation, where it is again written, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 3. 4.)

But notwithstanding all these blessed fruits, manifestly springing from the Heavenly Doctrines of Goodness and Truth delivered by the Sage, it was astonishing to see how those doctrines were still derided and rejected by many, who yet professed to believe in the authority of Divine Revelation. Such is the unhappy effect of a blind and deluded self-love, which will not suffer itself to be led, even by the weightiest and clearest evidence, to believe anything which opposes its own natural passions

and groundless prejudices. These mockers, therefore, like the Jews of old, attempted to conceal and to excuse the spirit of their incredulity, by asking the question, What sign shewest thou then that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work? (John vi. 30) forgetting that the most convincing of all signs of the Truth of any doctrine, and the most significant work which can be wrought to confirm its testimony, is its Divine Operation on the hearts and lives of mankind, in converting them from evil to good, and from the power of sin and of Satan unto God and His righteousness. It was this gross misconception of the proper nature of evidence, as applied to what is revealed from heaven, which betrayed these infidels into the rejection of the New Jerusalem and its celestial Doctrine. They wanted to see the walls, and gates, and foundations of the Holy City with their corporeal eyes, as if it was a material city, like what is seen and inhabited here on earth, nor could any interpretation of its spiritual meaning, howsoever rational and well grounded, induce them to relinquish the testimony of bodily sense and sight. In vain, therefore, was every attempt to convince them, that in the language of heaven a city doth not mean a city, nor a wall a wall, nor a gate a gate, nor a foundation a foundation, any more than the "mountain of the Lord," (Isaiah ii. 3.) and "the river of God," (Psalm lxxv. 9.) mean a mountain and a river. They still insisted that all expressions in the Sacred Scriptures ought to be interpreted and understood only according to their obvious literal meaning, and that to interpret and understand them otherwise, is to introduce a vague, uncertain, and visionary mode of expounding the Holy Oracles. The terrible consequence was, that as the Jews of old, by adopting the same literal method of interpretation, were blind to the knowledge and glory of the Incarnate God when He appeared amongst them in the flesh, so these letter-scholars were in like manner blinded to the knowledge and glory of the same God when He appeared amongst them in the Spirit, to build up His "holy tabernacle" again amongst men. While, therefore, thousands

and tens of thousands, in the spirit of true repentance and faith flocked together into the blessed City, entering in by its gates, and seeking and finding protection within its walls, and walking in its streets of gold, to their exceeding great joy and salvation, these doubting disputants were content to remain without the city contesting the point with God, and labouring to prove that His beloved City was not "come down out of heaven," because they could neither see its walls, its gates, nor its golden streets. Thus in all ages have the purposes of the Divine Mercy and Providence, in regard to men, been unhappily frustrated, because men, in so many instances, have interpreted the expressions of those purposes according to their own natural ideas, and have thus verified the the words of the eternal Truth, where it is written, concerning all such deluded ones, "hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." (Matt. xiii. 14.)

From the above history let the reader learn to take good heed to himself, lest at any time he should separate in himself, or suffer to be separated, those three essentials of all spiritual life and salvation, viz., Charity, Faith, and Good Works, from a full conviction that such separation must of necessity lead to all spiritual blindness and death in all things appertaining to God and to heaven and eternal life. Let him next learn to acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity as the Only True God, and His Word as the blessed medium of communication and conjunction with Him, because it descends from Him, conducts to Him, and in its interior senses is in close connection with Him and His Kingdom. Let him believe also, that our Lord Jesus Christ cannot properly be worshipped, nor His Holy Word received, but by loving, understanding, and doing the precepts of Goodness and Truth which it contains, and that none can so love, understand, and do,

but such as "shun all evils because they are sins" against that Great Redeeming God, His Life, and Kingdom. Lastly, let him learn that God, in these latter days of iniquity, of darkness, and of desolation, has been pleased to manifest Himself again to His expiring church in His Divine Humanity, for the purpose of raising it again unto life, and of building again amongst men His holy Tabernacle which was fallen down. And let him believe that, in agreement with ancient prediction, the Holy City is now descending, and that its pearl-gates are open to all, but that none will enter in except the humble, the penitent, the meek, and the poor in spirit, who are desirous to be delivered from all their corruptions, both of heart and of life, and to be renewed in the Holy Spirit of the God of the blessed City. All others will separate themselves through unbelief, but these will dwell within the "happy walls," and find eternal security under the protecting arm of its God, and will be admitted to join in the heavenly song of the "great multitude," who sing "Hallelujah; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Amen. (Rev. xix. 6,7.)



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