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A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

Reverend Mr. LAW:



Occasioned by some of

HIS LATE WRITINGS.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

“ Unwearied Patience, unalterable Meekness, are
“ the only Proofs, That GOD is in me of a
“ Truth.” *Spirit of Prayer.*

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L E T T E R

T O T H E

Reverend Mr. L A W.

R E V. S I R,

Dec. 15, 1755.

IT will be easily allowed by impartial Judges, that there are few Writers in the present Age, who stand in any competition with Mr. *Law*, as to Beauty and Strength of Language, Readiness, Liveliness, and Copiousness of Thought, and (in many points) Accuracy of Sentiment. And these uncommon Abilities you have long employed, not to gain either Honour or Preference, but with a steady view to promote

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mote

mote the Glory of God and peace and good Will among men. To this end you have published several Treatises, which must remain as long as *England* stands, almost unequalled standards of the Strength and Purity of our Language; as well as of sound practical Divinity. Of how great service these have been in reviving and establishing true, rational, Scriptural Religion, cannot fully be known, 'till the Author of that Religion shall descend in the clouds of Heaven.

I cannot but earnestly desire, that the Fruit of these your Labours may increase a thousand fold! I would fain contribute my Mite, to make your Writings still more useful: particularly, the "Treatise on Christian Perfection," and the "Serious Call to an Holy Life." Will you pardon me, Sir, if in order to this, I take upon me to mention some things in your late Writings which seem not altogether consistent with them, nor equally conducive to the great End you pursue? Can you bear, Sir, that I should do this, (I hope with Modesty and Respect, but yet) with great Plainness of speech! Especially where I apprehend the

revealed Truths of God, nay the very Essence of the Gospel, to lie at stake.

It may indeed seem strange not only to you, but to many, that such an one as I should presume thus to speak to You : a person superior to me in so many respects, beyond all degrees of comparison. But in some respects it is not impossible, the advantage may lie on my side. For 1. A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a Giant, may see farther than he does himself : 2. Being conscious of my own Weakness and Liableness to err, I am open to Instruction from others : whereas it is a doubt, whether you think any man in *Great Britain* capable of instructing You. 3. I am *a man of one Book*. In Matters of Religion, I regard no Writings but the inspired. *Tauler, Behmen*, and a whole Army of mystic authors, are with me nothing to *St. Paul*. In every point I appeal to *the Law and the testimony*, and value no Authority but this.

At a time when I was in great danger of not valuing this Authority enough, you made that important Observation, " I see where your mistake lies. You would have

a Philosophical Religion ; but there can be no such thing. Religion is the most plain, simple thing in the world. It is only, *We love him, because he first loved us.* So far as you add Philosophy to Religion, just so far you spoil it." This Remark I have never forgotten since. And I trust in God I never shall.

But have not you? Permit me, Sir, to speak plainly. Have you ever thought of it since? Is there a Writer in *England* who so continually blends Philosophy with Religion? Even in the Tracts on *The Spirit of Prayer*, and *The Spirit of Love*, wherein from the titles of them, one would expect to find no more of Philosophy, than in the Epistles of St. *John*. Concerning which give me leave to observe in general, 1. That the whole of it is utterly superfluous: A man may be full both of Prayer and Love, and not know a word of this fine Hypothesis: 2. The whole Hypothesis is unproved; it is all precarious, all uncertain. Some Parts of it you do indeed *attempt* to prove: But how? In plain terms, By begging the Question, The Proof is often *Petitio statim*, as they term it; bare asserting the very point in question.

question. Often you prove *ignotum per
aque ignotum*; one doubtful Proposition,
by another as doubtful: And not seldom,
Ignotum per ignotius: a doubtful Sen-
tence by one more doubtful still. 3. That
whole Hypothesis has a dangerous Tenden-
cy. It naturally leads men off from plain
practical Religion, and fills them with the
Knowledge that puffeth up, instead of the
Love that edifieth. And 4. It is often flat-
ly contradictory to Scripture, to Reason;
and to itself.

But over and above this superfluous, un-
certain, dangerous, irrational, unscriptu-
ral Philosophy, have not you lately griev-
ed many who are not strangers to the Spi-
rit of Prayer or Love, by advancing Te-
nets in Religion, some of which they think
are unsupported by Scripture, some even
repugnant to it? Allow me, Sir, first to
touch upon your Philosophy, and then to
speak freely concerning these.

I. As to your Philosophy, the main of
your Theory respects, 1. Things antece-
dent to the Creation; 2. The Creation it-
self;

self; 3. *Adam* in Paradise; 4. The Fall of Man.

I do not undertake formally to refute what you have asserted on any of these Heads. I dare not: I cannot answer either to GOD or Man, such an Employment of my Time. I could with as clear a Conscience spend three days in playing at Span-farthing or Push-pin;

“ Since putting all the words together
’Tis three blue beans in one blue bladder.”

I shall only give a Sketch of this wonderful System, and ask a few obvious Questions.

And 1. Of things antecedent to the Creation.

* “ All that can be conceived is GOD or *Nature* or *Creature* †.”

Is *Nature* created, or not created? It must be one or the other; for there is no Medium. If not created, is it not GOD? If created, is it not a *Creature*? How then

* Mr. Law’s Words are inclosed all along in Comma’s.

† Spirit of Prayer, Second Part, p. 33.

can these be three, *God, Nature, and Creature*? Since Nature must coincide either with *God* or *Creature*.

“ *Nature* is in itself a *hungry, wrathful Fire* * of life.”

“ *Nature* is and can be only a *Desire*. *Desire* is the very *Being* of *Nature* ^b.”

“ * *Nature* is only a *Desire*, because it is for the sake of *something else*. *Nature* is only a *torment*; because *it cannot help* itself to that which it wants.”

“ *Nature* is, the *Outward Manifestation* of the invisible *Glories* of *God* ^c.”

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

If *Desire* is the very *Being* of *Nature*; if it is a *torment*, an *hungry wrathful fire*: How is it “ *The Outward Manifestation* of the invisible *Glories* of *God*?”

“ *Nature* as well as *God* is antecedent to all *Creature* ^d.”

“ There is an *Eternal Nature*, as universal and as *unlimited* as *God* ^e.”

Is then *Nature* *God*? Or are there *Two Eternal, Universal, Infinite Beings*?

* Sp. of Pr. P. II. p. 34.

^b Spirit of Love, Part I. p. 20.

^c P. 34.

^d Part II. p. 62.

^e P. 59.

^f P. 64.

“ *Nothing*

“ Nothing is *before Eternal Nature* but God ^s.”

“ Nothing but ?” Is any thing before that which is *Eternal*?

But how is this grand Account of Nature consistent with what you say elsewhere?

“ *Nature, and Darknefs and Self, are but three different Expressions for one and the same thing ^a.*”

“ *Nature has all Evil and no Evil in it.*”
Yea ¹

“ *Nature, Self, or Darknefs has not only no Evil in it, but is the only Ground of all Good ^b.*”

O rare *Darknefs*!

“ Nature has seven *chief Properties*, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a Birth from the Deity in Nature.” (Is *Nature* a Birth from the Deity in *Nature*? Is not this flat Nonsense? And were it Sense, what kind of Proof is this? Is it not *ignotum per æquè ignotum*?) “ For God is tri-une and Nature is tri-une.” (“ Nature is tri-une.” Is not this flat begging the Question?) “ And hence arise Properties, three and three.” (Nay, why not

^s Ibid.

^a P. 181.

¹ P. 192.

^b Ibid.

nine and nine, which would be thrice as good?) "And that which brings these three and three into Union is another Property¹." Why so? Why may it not be Two, or Five, or none? Is it not rather the Will and Power of God?

"The three first Properties of Nature are the *whole* Essence of that *Desire*, which is, and is called Nature²." How? Are the *Properties* of a thing the same as the *Essence* of it? What Confusion is this? But if they were, can a *Part* of its Properties be the *whole* *Essence* of it?

"The three First Properties of Nature are *Attraction*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*. In these three Properties of the *Desire*, you see the Reason of the three great Laws of *Matter* and *Motion*, and need not be told, that Sir *Isaac* plowed with *Jacob Bebmen's* Heifer." Just as much as *Milton* plowed with *Francis Quarles's* Heifer.

How does it appear, that these are any of the Properties of *Nature*? If you mean by *Nature* any thing distinct from *Matter*? And how are they Properties of *Desire*? What a Jumbling of dissonant Notions is here?

¹ Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 64.

² P. 69.

³ P. 37.

"The

“ The Fourth Property (you affirm, not prove) is called *Fire* : The fifth, *the form of Light and Love*.” (What do you mean by the *form of Love* ? Are *Light* and *Love* one and the same thing ?) “ The sixth, *Sound* or *Understanding*.” (Are then *Sound* and *Understanding* the same thing ?

“ Then Rhyme with Reason may dispense,
And Sound has Right to govern Sense.”)

“ The Seventh, a *Life of triumphing Joy* ”. Is then a *Life of triumphing Joy*, “ *that which brings the three and three Properties into Union* ?” If so, how can it be “ the Result of that Union ?” Do these things hang together ?

To conclude this wonderful Head. You say, “ *Attraction* is an incessant Working of three contrary Properties, *Drawing*, *Resisting*, and *Whirling* !” That is in plain terms (a Discovery worthy of *Jacob Behmen*, and yet not borrowed by *Sir Isaac* !) “ *Drawing* is incessant *Drawing*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*.”

▪ P. 58.

▪ P. 200.

II. Of

II. Of the Creation:

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

“ Angels first inhabited the Region which is now taken up by the Sun and Planets that move round him. It was then all a *glassy Sea*, in which perpetual Scenes of Light and Glory were ever rising and changing in obedience to their Call. Hence they fancied they had Infinite Power, and resolved to abjure all Submission to God. In that moment they were *whirled* down, into their own *dark, fiery, working* Powers. And in that moment the glassy Sea, by the wrathful workings of these Spirits, was broke in pieces and became a Chaos of *fire and wrath, thicckness and darknefs.*”

I would enquire upon this,

1. Did ever any pious Man before take such Liberty with the most High God?

2. Is not this being immeasurably *wise above that is written?* Wiser than all the Prophets and all the Apostles put together?

• Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 14, &c.

3. How

3. How can any thing of this be proved? Why thus: "*Darkness was upon the face of the deep.* What can this mean, but that the Fall of Angels brought *Desolation into the very place of this world?*"

Does it not mean rather, that the Deluge brought *Noah's Ark into St. Paul's Church-yard?*

Secondly, "The Scripture shews, that the Spirit of God entering into *this Darkness,*" that is, into the very place where Satan reigned before, "brought forth a new World."

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

Thirdly, "How could the Devil be called *The Prince of this World,* if it was not once his own Kingdom?" *ibid.*

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

Fourthly, "Had it not been their own Kingdom, the Devils could have no Power here. *This may pass for a Demonstration,*

† Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 49.

‡ P. 50.

That

That this is the very place in which the Angels fell'."

I doubt, it *will not pass*. Cannot God permit Satan to exert his Power, wherever it pleaseth Him?

Hitherto then we have not a grain of sound Proof. Yet you pronounce with all Peremptoriness.

"The Grounds of true Religion cannot be truly known but by going back so far as *this Fall of Angels*'."

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

"It was their Revolt which brought *Wrath* and *Fire* and *Thicknes* and *Darknes* into Nature'."

If it was Sin that brought *Fire* into the World, (which is hard to prove) did it bring *Darknes*? And *Thicknes* too? But if it did, what harm is there in either? Is not *Thicknes* as good in its place as *Thinness*? And as to *Darknes* you say yourself "It has not only *no Evil* it it, but is the only ground of all possible Good."

† P. 51:

‡ P. 37, 38.

§ Ibid.

Touching

Touching Creation in general you aver,

“ A Creation *out of nothing* is no better Sense than a Creation *into nothing*.” p. 60.

“ A Creation *into nothing*” is a Contradiction in terms. Can you say a Creation *out of nothing* is so? It is indeed Tautology: Since the single term *Creation* is equivalent with *Production out of nothing*.

“ That all things were created out of nothing, has not the least tittle of Scripture to support it.”

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

“ Nay, it is a Fiction big with the grossest Absurdities. It is full of horrid Consequences. It separates every thing from God. It leaves no Relation between God and the Creature. For” (mark the Proof!) “ if it is created out of *nothing*, it cannot have *something* of God in it’.”

The Consequence is not clear. “Till this is made good can any of those Propositions be allowed?

“ Nature is the first Birth of God.” Did God *create* it or not? If not, how

* P. 55.

† P. 58.

came

came it *out of* him? If he did, did he create it out of something or nothing?

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

“ The *Materiality* of the Angelic Kingdom was *spiritual*.” What is *Spiritual Materiality*? Is it not much the same with *Immaterial Materiality*?

“ This *Spiritual Materiality* brought forth the heavenly *Flesh and Blood* of Angels.” That Angels have Bodies you affirm elsewhere. But are you sure, they have *Flesh and Blood*? Are not the Angels Spirits? And surely a *Spirit bath not flesh and blood*.

“ The whole *glassy Sea* was a Mirror of beauteous Forms, Colours, and Sounds perpetually springing up, having also Fruits and Vegetables, but not gross, as the Fruits of the World. This was continually bringing forth new *Figures of Life*; not Animals, but *Ideal Forms* of the *endless Divisibility of Life*.”

This likewise is put into the Mouth of

^a Sp. of Pr. P. II. p. 27. ^y P. 57. ^z P. I. p. 18, 19.

GOD. But is Nonsense from the most High ?

What less is " a Mirror of *beauteous Sounds?*" And what are *Figures of Life?* Are they alive or dead ? Or between both ? As a Man may be between sleeping and waking ? What are " *ideal Forms* of the endless Divisibility of Life ?" Are they the same with those *Forms* of Stones, one of which *Maraton* took up (while he was seeking *Yaratilda*,) to throw at the *Form* of a Lion ?

" The *glassy Sea* being become thick and dark, the Spirit converted its Fire and Wrath into Sun and Stars, its Dross and Darknes into Earth, its Mobility into Air, its Moisture into Water.*"

Was *Wrath* converted into *Sun* or *Stars?* Or a little of it bestowed on both ? How was *Darknes* turned into *Earth?* Or *Mobility* into *Air?* Has not Fire more *Mobility* than this ? Did there need Omnipotence, to convert *Fire* into *Fire?* Into the Sun ? Or *Moisture* into *Water?*

" Darknes was absolutely unknown to the Angels 'till they fell. Hence it appears, That Darknes is the Ground of the Ma-

* Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 29.

teriality

teriality of Nature." Appears? To whom? Nothing appears to me, but the proving *ignotum per ignotius*.

"All *Life* is a *Desire*." Might you not as well have affirmed, All *Life* is a *Hatchet*? "Every *Desire*, as *such*, is and must be, made up of *Contrariety*." "God's bringing a sensible *Creature* into *Existence*, is the bringing the *Power* of *Desire* into a *creaturely State*." Does not all this require a little more *Proof*? And not a little *Illustration*?

"*Hard* and *soft*, *thick* and *thin*, could have no *Existence*, 'till *Nature* lost its first *Purity*. And this is the one true *Origin* of all the *Materiality* of this *World*. Else nothing *thick* or *hard* could ever have been." Does not this call for much *Proof*? Since most *People* believe, *God* created *Matter*, merely because *so* it seemed good in his *Sight*.

But you add a kind of *Proof*. "How comes a *Flint* to be so *hard* and *dark*? It is because the *Meekness* and *Fluidity* of the *Light*, *Air*, and *Water* are not in it." The *Meekness* of *Light*, and *Air*, and *Water*! Pray what is that? Is *Air* or *Water*.

^b P. 33.

^d *Ibid.*

^c *Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 198.

^e P. I. p. 21.

^f *Ibid.*

capable of Virtue? O the *Meekness* of a smooth Canal!

“The first Property of Nature is a *constringing, attracting, and coagulating Power*.”
I wait the Proof of this.

“God brought gross Matter out of the sinful Properties of Nature, that thereby the fallen Angels might lose *all their Power over them.*” And have they lost *all Power over them*? Is Satan no longer *Prince of the Power of the Air*?

“As all *Matter* is owing to the first Property of Nature, which is an *astringing, compressing Desire*” — Stop here, Sir. I totally deny, that any unintelligent Being is capable of any *Desire* at all. And yet this gross, capital Mistake runs through your whole Theory.

“The Fourth Property is *Fire*” — Where is the Proof? — “which changes the Properties of Nature into an heavenly State¹.” Proof again. “The Conjunction of God and Nature brings forth *Fire*.” This needs the most Proof of all.

“Every right kindled *Fire* must give forth *Light*.” Why? “Because the Eternal *Fire* is the Effect of Supernatural *Light*.”

³ P. 24.

^b P. 27.

¹ P. 28.

^{*} P. 49.

¹ P. 48.

Nay then *Light* should rather give forth
Fire.

“ The *Fire* of the *Soul* and that of the
Body has but *one Nature* ¹.” Can either
Bebmen or *Spinoza* prove this?

III. Of Adam in Paradise.

“ *Paradise* is an heavenly *birth of life* ¹.”
How does this Definition explain the
Thing defined?

“ Adam had at first both an heavenly
and an earthly Body. Into the latter was
the *Spirit* of this World breathed, and in
this Spirit and Body did the heavenly Spi-
rit and Body of Adam dwell ^m”. So he
had originally two Bodies and two Souls!
This will need abundance of Proof. “ The
Spirit and Body of this World was the *Me-
dium*, thro’ which he was to have Com-
merce with this World.” The Proof. “ But
it was no more alive in him, than Satan
and the Serpent were alive in him *at his
first Creation*. Good and Evil were then
only in his Outward Body and in the Out-
ward World.” What was there Evil in the
World, and even in Adam, together with

¹ P. 52.

^l Spirit of Prayer, P. I. p. 6.

^m P. 7.

Satan and the Serpent, *at his first Creation?*

“But they were kept *unactive* by the Power of the Heavenly Man within him:” Did this case over the Earthly Man? Or the Earthly case the Heavenly?

But “he had power to chuse, whether he would use his Outward Body, only as a Means of opening the Outward World to him”—So it was not quite *unactive* neither: “or of opening the bestial Life in himself”. Till this was opened in him, nothing in this outward World, no more than his own outward Body” (So now it is *unactive* again,) “could *act* upon him, make any Impressions upon him, or raise any Sensations in him: Neither had he any feeling of Good or Evil from it.” All this being entirely New, we must beg clear and full Proof of it.

“God said to Man at his Creation, Rule thou over this *imperfect, perishing* World, without partaking of its *impure* Nature.” Was not the World then at first *perfect* in its kind? Was it *impure* then? Or would it have *perished*, if Man had not sinned? And are we sure that God speaks thus!

* P. 9.

* P. 21.

“The

“ The End God proposed in the Creation, was the restoring all Things to their glorious State¹.” In the Creation? Was not this rather the End which he proposed in the Redemption?

“ Adam was created to keep what is called the *Curse*, covered and overcome by Paradise. And as *Paradise concealed and overcame* all the *Evil* in the Elements, so Adam's Heavenly Man *concealed* from him all the *Evil* of the earthly Nature that was under it.” Can we believe, that there was any *Evil* in Man from the Creation, if we believe the Bible?

“ Our own Good Spirit is the very Spirit of GOD: and yet not GOD, but the Spirit of GOD *kindled into a creaturely Form.*” Is there any Meaning in these Words? And how are they consistent with those that follow? “ This Spirit is so related to GOD, as my *Breath* is to the *Air.*” Nay, if so, your Spirit is GOD. For your *Breath is Air.*

“ That Adam had at first the Nature of an Angel is plain from hence, That he was *both Male and Female* in one Person. Now

¹ Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 61.

² P. 62.

³ Spirit of Pr. P. II. p. 195.

this (the being both Male and Female) is the very *Perfection* of the Angelic Natures." Naturalists say, that *Snails* have this *Perfection*. But who can prove, that *Angels* have?

You attempt to prove it thus. "*In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels.* Here we are told, 1. That the being Male and Female in one Person, is the very Nature of Angels. 2. That Man shall be so too at the Resurrection. Therefore he was so at first."

Indeed, Sir, we are not told here, that Angels are Hermaphrodites. No, nor any thing like it. The whole Passage is, *They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the Angels;* (Luke xx. 35, 36.) namely, (not in being Male and Female, but) in this, That they cannot die any more. This is the indisputable Meaning of the Words; So this whole Proof vanishes into Air.

P. 65.

P. 66.

You

You have one more Thought, full as new as this. "All earthly *Beasts* are but *creaturely Eruptions* of the Disorder that is broken out from the fallen Spiritual World. So earthly Serpents are but transitory Outbirths of Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath."

How shall we reconcile this with the *Mosaic Account*? And GOD said, *Let the earth bring forth cattle, and creeping thing and beast. And GOD made the beast of the earth; and GOD saw that it was good, Gen. i. 24, 25.* Does any thing here intimate, That *Beasts* or *Serpents* literally crept out of the Womb of *Sin*? And what have *Serpents*, in particular, to do with *Covetousness*? Or indeed with *Envy*, unless in Poetic Fables?

IV. Of the Fall of Man.

"Adam had lost much of his first Perfection, before Eve was taken out of him. *It is not good,* saith GOD, *that Man should be alone.* This shews that Adam had now made *that not to be good,* which GOD saw to be good when he created him." Nay, does it shew either more or less than this, that it was

* Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 207.

* Sp. of Pr. P. 74.

not

not conducive to the wise Ends God had in View, for Man to remain single?

“ God then divided the Human Nature, into a Male and a Female Creature. Otherwise Man would have brought forth his own Likeness out of himself, in the same manner as he had a Birth from God; But Adam let in an adulterous Love of the World: By this his Virginity was lost, and he had no longer a Power of bringing forth a Birth from himself.”

We have no Shadow of Proof for all this.

“ This State of Inability is called, his *falling into a deep sleep*.” How does this agree with *The LORD GOD caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam?* Gen. ii. 21.

“ God took his Eve out of him, as a lesser Evil, to avoid a greater. For it was *a less Folly*, to love the Female Part of himself, than to love things lower than himself.”

Who can extract this out of the Words of *Moses*? Who can reconcile it with the Words of our Lord? *He who made them at the beginning* (not a word of any previous Fall) *made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife.* Mat. xix. 4, 5. Is here

7 P. 75.

* P. 76.

* P. 77.

any

any intimation, that for a Man to love his Wife, is only a *less Folly* than to love the World? *A man ought so to love his wife, even as Christ the Church.* Is there any *Folly* in the Love of Christ to the Church?

“ Marriage came in by Adam’s *falling from his first Perfection*.” Does this Account do Honour to that Institution? Any more than that memorable Saying of an eminent Mystic, “ Marriage is but licensed Whoredom.”

“ Had Adam stood, no Eve would have been taken out of him. But from Eve God raised that Angelic Man, whom Adam should have brought forth without Eve, who is called *The Second Adam*, as being both Male and Female.” Many things here want Proof. How does it appear 1. That Eve would not have been, had Adam stood? 2. That had he stood, he would have brought forth the *Second Adam* without Eve? 3. That Christ was both Male and Female? and 4. Was on *this* Account called *The Second Adam*?

“ The *Second Adam* is now to do *that* which the First should have done.” Is he to do no more than *that*? No more

* P. 88.

† P. 79.

‡ P. 84.

than

than a *mere Creature should have done?* Then what need is there of his being any more than a Creature? What need of his being **GOD?**

“ Our having from him a New *Heavenly Flesh* and Blood, raised in us by his *spiritual Power*, is the strongest Proof, That we should have been born of Adam by *the same spiritual Power*.”

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

“ From Adam’s Desire turned toward the World, the Earth got a *Power* of giving forth an *evil Tree*. It was his *Will* which opened a Passage for the *Evil* hid in the Earth.” (I know not how it came there, before Adam fell) “ to bring forth a Tree in its own Likeness. No sooner was it brought forth, than God assured him that Death was hid in it: A plain Proof, That this Tree *was not from GOD*, but from a Power in the Earth, which could not shew itself, till Adam desired to taste something which was not Paradisiacal.” This

This is *the marvellous* in the highest Degree, and affords many Questions not very easy to be answered. But waving all these, Can any thing be more flatly contradictory to the Mosaic Account? We read there, *The LORD GOD formed Man*, Gen. ii. 7. *And the LORD planted a garden*, v. 8. *And out of the ground made the LORD GOD every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, v. 9. Is it not here plainly taught, That *this tree was from GOD*? That not the Desire of Adam, but *the LORD GOD made this tree to grow*, as well as *the tree of life*? And when was it, That God gave him that solemn Warning: *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*? v. 17. Not as soon as that tree was brought forth; but when Adam was put into the Garden.

“ At first all the Natural Properties of Man’s *creaturely Life* were hid in God, just as the Natural Qualities of Darkness are hid, till glorified by the Light!.” Nay, were they not sufficiently hid by the heavenly Man? Need they be hid over and over?

† Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 181.

“ But

“ But when Man fell, all these Properties broke forth, just as the Darknefs, when it has loft the Light must fhew forth its own Coldnefs, Horror and other uncomfortable Qualities.” *Exemplum placet!* But are either Coldnefs or Horror, *Natural* Qualities of Darknefs? If fo, they must be infeparable from it. But who will affirm this?

“ Darknefs, tho’ contrary to Light, is yet absolutely neceffary to it. Without this no Manifeftation or Vifibility of Light could poffibly be.” This is absolutely new and furprizing. But how is it to be proved?

Thus: “ *GOD dwelleth in the light which no Man can approach.* Therefore Light cannot be manifefted to Man but by Darknefs.” Ah poor Confequence! Would not the fame Text juft as well prove Tranfubftantiation?

“ *Light and Darknefs do every thing, whether good or evil, that is done in Man. Light is all Power, Light is all things and nothing.*”

I cannot conceive what Ideas you affix to the Terms, *Light* and *Darknefs*. But I forget. You except againft *Ideas*. Can you teach us, to *think without them?*

^s P. 189.

^b *Ibid.*

Once

Once more. You say, "*Darkness* is a *positive Thing*, and has a *Strength* and *Substantiality* in it." Truly, Sir, you say very handsome things of *Darkness*, and seem to be much in love with it. I have scarce met with a greater Friend to it, except "the illuminated *Jacob Behmen*."

But, Sir, have you not done him an irreparable Injury? I do not mean, by misrepresenting his Sentiments, (though some of his profound Admirers are positive; That you misunderstand and murder him throughout:) But by dragging him out of his awful Obscurity; by pouring Light upon his venerable *Darkness*? Men may admire the Deepness of the Well; and the Excellence of the Water it contains. But if some officious Person puts a Light into it, it will appear to be both very shallow and very dirty.

I could not have borne to spend so many Words on so egregious Trifles, but that they are mischievous Trifles.

Hæ nugæ feræ ducunt

In mala.

¹ P. 182.

This

This is dreadfully apparent in your own Case, (I would not speak but that I dare not refrain) whom notwithstanding your uncommon Abilities, they have led astray in things of the greatest Importance. Bad Philosophy has by insensible degrees paved the way for bad Divinity: In consequence of a miserable Hypothesis, you advance many things in Religion also, some of which are unsupported by Scripture, some even repugnant to it.

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

And 1. You deny the Omnipotence of God.

You say, "As no seeing Eye *could* be created, unless there was *antecedent* to it, a natural Visibility of things," -- Why not? Why might not *visible things* be created at the same instant with it? — "So no Creature *could* come into any *Natural Life*, unless such a State of Nature was antecedent to it." "All that God does, is and *must be* done in and by the *Powers* of Nature!"

^k P. 60.

^l P. 135.

What

What then did it avail, that as you elsewhere say, GOD was *before Nature*? He not only could not then do all things, but he could do nothing, till *Nature* existed. But if so, how came *Nature* itself, this *Second Eternal*, to exist at all? Pray declare the Matters of Eternity a little farther, and unveil the bosom of the Great Deep, if you was indeed with GOD, *when he laid the foundations of the earth.*

“ There cannot possibly be *any other Difference* between created Beings, than arises from that out of which they were created^m.” Why not? Who will stay the hand of the Almighty, or say unto him, What dost thou?

“ No Fruits or Vegetables could have sprung up in the divided Elements, but because they are Parts of that glassy Sea, where angelical Fruits grew beforeⁿ.”

But how came those Fruits to *grow before*? How came they to grow in the glassy Sea? Were they not produced out of nothing at first? If not, GOD was not *before Nature*. If they were, cannot he still pro-

^m P. 60.

ⁿ Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 19.

duce out of nothing whatsoever pleaseth him?

“ All *outward Nature*, being fallen from Heaven”—That we deny—“ must *as well as it can*, do and work as it did in Heaven °.”
As well as it can! What can *it* do without God? Who upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power! And what *can it not do*, if He pleaseth? Or rather, what cannot He do, with or without it?

“ Matter could not possibly be but from Sin °.” That is, in very plain terms, God could not have created Matter, if Satan had not sinned!

“ God could not create Man with a soul and a body, unless there was such a thing as Nature, *antecedent* to the Creation of man †.”

Why could not God do this? Because “ Body and Spirit are not *two separate things*, but are only the inward and outward Condition of *one and the same Being*. *Every Creature must* have its own body, and cannot be without it. For its Body is that” —Who would have thought it? “ which makes it manifest to itself. It cannot know, either that it is, or what it is, but by its own body † !”

° P. 20. † Sp. of Love, Part I. p. 23. † P. 30. † P. 32.
 What

What a Heap of bold Assertions is here, to curb Omnipotence? And not one of them has a tittle of Proof, unless one can prove the other.

But we have more still. "The Body (of any Creature) has nothing of *it's own*, but is solely the *outward Manifestation*, of that which is *inwardly* in the Soul. Every Animal has nothing in its outward *Form* or *Shape*, but that which is the *Form*, and *Growth* of its Spirit. As no *Number* can be any thing else, but that which the *Units* contained in it make it to be, so no *Body* can be any thing else but the *Coagulation* or *Sum total* of those Properties of Nature that are *coagulated* in it."

Astonishing! What a Discovery is this? That a Body is only a *curdled Spirit*! That our Bodies are only the *Sum total* of our spiritual Properties: and that the *Form* of every man's Body is only the *Form* of his Spirit made visible! Surely these, if any other, are

"Remarks which none did e'er disclose
In smooth-paced Verse, or hobbling Prose."

* P. 33.

C 2

"Every

“ Every Spirit manifests its own Nature by that Body which *proceeds from it as its own birth*.”

Does the Body then grow out of the Spirit, as the Hair and Nails grow out of the Body? And this, in consequence of the “ Powers of *Nature*,” distinct from the Power and Will of God?

To abridge God of his Power, after Creation, as well as before it, you affirm farther,

“ This is an axiom that cannot be shaken, Nothing can rise higher than its *first created Nature*; and therefore an Angel at last, must have been an Angel at first. Do you think it possible for an Ox to be changed into a rational Philosopher? Yet this is as possible as for one who has only by Creation the Life of this World, to be changed into an Angel of Heaven. The Life of this World can reach no farther than this World: *No Omnipotence of God can carry it farther*. Therefore if Man is to be an Angel at last, he must have been created an Angel: Because no Creature can possibly have any other Life or higher

¹ Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 17.

Degree of Life, than that which his Creation brought forth in him.”

I have quoted this Passage at some length, that the Sense of it may appear, beyond Dispute. But what Divinity? And what Reasoning to support it? Can God “raise nothing higher than its *first created State*? Is it not possible for Him, to change an Ox or a Stone into a rational Philosopher, or a Child of *Abraham*? To change a Man or a Worm into an Angel of Heaven? Poor *Omnipotence* which cannot do this! Whether He *will*, or no, is another Question. But if he *cannot* do it, how can he be said, to do *whatsoever pleaseth him, in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places*?

Thus does your Attachment to a miserable Philosophy, lead you to deny the *Almighty Power* of God.

II. It leads you, in the Second Place, to deny his *Justice*, to abridge this no less than his *Power*.

This I may be permitted to consider more at large; because though it was allowed by all the wiser Heathens of past

* Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 81.

Ages, yet it is now one main Hinge on which the Controversy between *Christianity* and *Deism* turns. To convert a thousand Deists therefore, by giving up this Point, with the Doctrine of *Justification* which is built upon it, is little more than it would be, to convert as many Jews, by allowing the Messiah is not yet come. It is converting them by allowing all they contend for: By granting them the main point in question. Consequently it is no other than *establishing* Deism, while it pretends to overturn it.

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

God himself hath declared, that in consequence of his *Justice*, he will in the great Day of General Retribution, *render to every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil.*

But man says, No. "There is no *righteous Wrath* or *vindictive Justice* in God.*" If so, ye may go on, ye children of the Devil,

* Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 108.

in doing the Works of your Father. It is written indeed *the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness*. But this is not literally to be taken; for properly speaking, there is no such thing as the *Wrath of GOD*!

Fear not the bug-bear of *everlasting burnings*. There is not only no *everlasting* Punishment, but no Punishment at all; no such thing in the Universe. It is a mere vulgar Error!

I should be extremely glad to prophesy these smooth things too, did not a Difficulty lie in the way. As nothing is more frequently or more expressly declared in Scripture, than God's *Anger* at Sin, and his *punishing* it both temporally and eternally, every Assertion of this kind strikes directly at the Credit of the whole Revelation. For if there be one Falshood in the Bible, there may be a thousand; neither can it proceed from the God of Truth. However I will weigh all your Assertions: And may the God of Truth shine on both our Hearts!

I must premise, That I have no Objection to the using the words *Wrath* (or *Anger*) and *Justice* as nearly synonymous; see-

ing *Anger* stands in the very same relation to *Justice* as *Love* does to *Mercy*: *Love* and *Anger* being the *Passions*, (speaking after the manner of men) which correspond with the *Dispositions* of *Mercy* and *Justice*. Whoever therefore denies *God* to be capable of *Wrath* or *Anger*, acts consistently in denying his *Justice* also.

You begin. 1. "No *Wrath* (*Anger*, *Vindictive Justice*) ever was or ever will be in *GOD*². If a *Wrath* of *GOD* were anywhere, it must be every where." So it is, as sure as the *Just GOD* is every where.

2. "*Wrath* and *Pain* dwell only in the *Creatures*²." *Pain* is only in *Creatures*. Of *Wrath* we are to enquire farther.

3. "To say *GOD* ever *punished* any *Creature* out of *Wrath*, is as absurd as to say, He *began the Creation* out of *Wrath*." I conceive not. It is not as *absurd* to say, *GOD* is angry at the *guilty*, as to say *GOD* is angry at the *innocent*. Now it is certain, when *GOD* *began the Creation* of *Man*, no *guilty* men were in being.

4. "He must always *will* that to his *Creatures*, which he *willed* at the *Creation* of them." True. And he *willed*, at the

² Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p 27.

² P. 28.

very

very Creation of Men, to reward every one as his Work should be.

5. "God is incapable of *willing* Pain to any Creature, because he is nothing but Goodness." You mean, because his Goodness excludes Justice. Nay, that is the very Question.

6. "God can give nothing but *Happiness from himself*, because he hath nothing else *in himself*." As if you had said, "God can give nothing but *Infinity from himself*, because he has nothing else in himself." 'Tis certain he has not. He is all Infinity. Yet that Argument will not hold.

7. "God can no more begin to have any *Wrath* after the Creature is fallen, than he could be *infinite Wrath and Rage* from all Eternity?" No changing the terms: We have nothing to do with *Rage*. This properly means *excessive Anger*. Setting this aside, I answer to the argument, God was *infinitely just* from all eternity: In consequence of which, his *Anger then began to shew itself*, when Man had sinned.

8. "No *Wrath* can be in God, unless God was from all eternity an *infinity of*

^b P. 29.

^c Spirit of Love, Part I. p. 3.

^d Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 4.

Wrath."

Wrath:" that is, *infinitely just*. So he was, and will be to all eternity.

9. "There must either be no possibility of *Wrath*, or no possibility of its *having any bounds*."

The divine *Justice* cannot possibly *have any Bounds*. It is as unlimited as his Power.

10. "Two things shew the Nature of *Wrath*, a tempest and a raging sore. The former is *Wrath in the Elements*; the latter is *Wrath in the Body*. Now both these are a disorder. But there is no Disorder in God. Therefore there is no *wrath in God*."

"A tempest is *Wrath in the Elements*; a raging Sore is *Wrath in the Body*." It is not. Neither the Body, the Elements, nor any thing inanimate is capable of *Wrath*. Who ever talked or heard of the *Wrath* of a Cudgel? Yea, or of a Cannon-Ball? And when we say, "The Sore looks *angry*," does any one dream, this is to be taken literally? The Pillars of the Argument therefore are rotten. Consequently the Superstructure falls to the Ground.

In vain would you prop it up by saying, "*Wrath* can have *no other Nature* in Body

† Page 6.

‡ Page 7.

§ Page 13.

than

than it has in Spirit, because it can have *no Existence* in Body, but what it has from Spirit. Nay, it can have *no Existence* in Body at all, as you yourself affirm presently after. Yet you strangely go on, "There is but *one Wrath* in all outward things, animate or inanimate." Most true; for all wrath is in animals; things inanimate are utterly incapable of it,

"There can be but *one kind* of Wrath, because nothing can be *wrathful* but Spirit." ^f

Never then let us talk of *wrathful Elements*, of *wrathful Tempests* or *Sores*, again.

11. "*Wrath* and *Evil* are but two words for the same thing." This is home. But it cannot be granted without Proof.

12. "God is as incapable of Wrath, as of *Thicknes*, *Hardnes*, and *Darknes*; because *Wrath* can exist no where else but in *Thicknes*, *Hardnes*, and *Darknes*." ^h

So far from it, that Wrath cannot exist in *Thicknes* or *Hardnes* at all. For these are *Qualities* of Bodies; and "nothing can be *wrathful* but Spirit."

^e Page 15.

^f Page 18.

^g Ibid.

^h Page 71.

13. "Wrath cannot be in any Creature, till it has lost its first Perfection¹." That remains to be proved.

Thus far you have advanced Arguments for your Doctrine. You next attempt to answer Objections.

And to the Objection that Scripture speaks so frequently of *the Wrath of GOD*, you answer,

1. "All the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* that ever was in any Creature, is to be called and looked on as the *Wrath and Vengeance of GOD*."

I totally deny that Proposition, and call for the Proof of it.

2. "GOD works every thing in Nature. Therefore all *Death*, or *Rage*, or *Curse*, wherever it is, must be said, in the Language of Scripture, to be the *Wrath* or *Vengeance of God*^k."

I deny the Consequence. The latter Proposition does not follow from the former. And indeed it is not true. All *Death* and *Rage* and *Curse*, is not *in the Language of Scripture* term'd the *Wrath and Vengeance of GOD*.

¹ Page 72.

^k Page 55.

3. " Because the Devils have their Life from GOD ; therefore their *curfed, miserable wrathful Life*, is said to be the *Curse and Misery*, and *Wrath of GOD* upon them¹."

Neither can this be proved, that the Devils *having their Life from GOD*, is the Reason why they are said to be *under his Wrath*. Nor does the Scripture ever term their *wrathful, miserable Life*, the *Wrath or Misery of GOD*.

4. " Devils are his, as well as holy Angels. Therefore all the *Wrath and Rage* of the one, must be as truly *his Wrath and Rage* burning in them, as *the Joy* of the others is *his Joy*^m."

So it seems, *The Wrath of GOD* in Scripture means no more or less than *The Wrath of the Devil!* However, this Argument will not prove it. *The Joy* of Saints (not of Angels that I remember) is stiled *The Joy of their Lord*, because he *prepared* it for them and *bestows* it on them. Does he *prepare* and *bestow* the *Rage* of Devils upon them?

5. " *His Wrath and his Vengeance* are no more in GOD, than what the Psalmist calls *his Ice and his Frost*ⁿ."

¹ Page 53.

^m Page 54.

ⁿ Page 74.

*

There

There is nothing parallel in the Case. We can't take the latter Expressions literally, without glaring Absurdity : the former we may.

6. "*The Earth trembled because he was wroth.* No wrath here but in the Elements."

Nay, if so, here was no Wrath at all. For we are agreed, "Only Spirits can be wrathful."

7: One more Text, usually cited against your Opinion, you improve into an Argument for it. "*Avenge not yourselves, for Vengeance is mine.* This is a full Proof that Vengeance is not in God. If it was, then it would belong to every child of God, or he could not *be perfect as his Father is perfect.*"

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

Having now proved (as you suppose) that God has neither *Anger* nor *Justice*, it remains only to shew (which indeed follows by easy and natural Consequence) that he never did, nor can *punish*.

“ To say Adam’s miserable State was a *Punishment* inflicted upon him by God, is an utter Absurdity^p. His Sin had not the least *Punishment* of any kind inflicted upon it by God^q. ”

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

Of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat: in the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Gen. ii. 17.

And the Serpent said unto the Woman, ye shall not die. chap. iii. 4. *And the Woman being deceived did eat.* 1 Tim. ii. 14. *and gave unto her Husband and he did eat.* Gen. iii. 6.

And the Lord GOD said unto the Serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed—Dust thou shalt eat all the Days of thy Life. ver. 14.

And I will put enmity between thee and the Woman. ver. 15.

^p Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 24.

^q Page 26.

Unto

Unto the Woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow and (that is, in) thy Conception. ver. 16.

And unto Adam he said, because thou hast eaten of the Tree, cursed is the Ground for thy Sake: in Sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the Days of thy Life. ver. 17.

Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. ver. 19.

Can any Man read this, and affirm, "God did not inflict the least Punishment of any kind, either on Eve or Adam, or the Serpent?" With what Eyes or Understanding then must he read?

But you say, "All that came on Adam was implied in what he chose to himself." It was. *He chose it to himself* in the same Sense, that he who robs chuses to be hanged. But this does not at all prove, that the Death that one or the other suffers is no Punishment.

You go on. "*Fire and Brimstone, or Manna rained on the Earth, are only one and the same Love.*" It was the same Love that preserved Noah, burnt up Sodom, and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the red Sea^b."

^a Page 25. ^a Spirit of Love, Part II. p 72 ^b Page 78.

Surely

Surely nothing can equal this, unless you add, (which indeed you must do, to be consistent with yourself) “ It is *one and the same Love* which will say, *Come ye blessed, and depart ye cursed into everlasting Fire.*”

You add, “ *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.* Here you have God’s own Word for it, *nothing but his Love chasteneth.*” We know his Love chasteneth *his Children.* Of those only God is speaking here, as appears from the latter Clause of the Sentence. And yet we cannot say even as to them, It is *nothing but his Love.* It is Mercy mixt with Justice.

You cite one Text more: *Amos iv. 9:* “ *I have smitten you; yet have ye not returned to me,*” and say, “ Now how is it possible for Words to give stronger Proof *)” Proof of what? Not that God did not *punish* them; but that *in the midst of Wrath be remembered Mercy.*

To these Texts of Scripture (wide enough of the Point) you subjoin, “ The Doctrine of Atonement made by Christ, is the strongest Demonstration, that the *Wrath to be atoned, cannot be in God.*” Who talks of *Wrath to be atoned?* *The Wrath to be atoned*

* Page 81.

* Ibid.

* Page 85.

is neither Sense nor *English*; tho' it is a Solecism you perpetually run into: (I hope not on purpose to puzzle the Cause) That the *Sin to be atoned* cannot be in GOD we all allow; but it does not affect the Question.

Once more, to silence all Contradiction at once, to stop the Mouths of all Gain-sayers, you say, "This (that there is no *Anger*, no vindictive *Justice* in GOD) is no *Punishment* at all inflicted by him, is openly asserted, constantly affirmed and repeated in the plainest Letter of Scripture." Whether this, or the very Reverse is true, will appear, from a few out of numberless Texts, which I shall barely set down, without any Comment, and leave to your cool Consideration.

You say, I. There is no vindictive, avenging, or punitive *Justice* in GOD: II. There is no *Wrath* or *Anger* in GOD. III. GOD inflicts no *Punishment* on any Creature, neither in this World, nor that to come.

God says,

I. *The just Lord is in the midst of you,*
Zeph. iii. 5.

† Page 82.

Justice

*Justice and Judgment are the Habitation
of thy Throne. Psa. lxxxix. 14.*

*Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?
Job xxxiv. 17.*

*He is excellent in Power, and in plenty of
Justice. Job xxxvii. 23.*

*Just and true are thy Ways, O King of Saints.
Rev. xv. 3.*

*Thou art just in all that is brought upon us.
Neh. ix. 33.*

*There is no GOD beside me, a just GOD
and a Saviour. Isai. xlv. 21.*

*Whom GOD hath set forth, that he might be
just, and the justifier of him that believeth in
Jesus. Rom. iii. 25, 26.*

*II. The Lord heard their Words, and was
wroth. Deut. i. 34.*

*The Lord was wroth with me for your Sakes.
ch. iii. 26.*

I was wroth with my People. Isai. xlvii. 6.

*For his Covetousness I was wroth, ch. lvii.
17.*

*And the Anger of the Lord was kindled
against Israel. Num. xxv. 3.*

*His Wrath is against them that forsake
him, Ezra viii. 22.*

Thou art very wroth with us. Lam. v. 20.

Thou art wroth, for we have sinned. Isai. lxiv. 5.

Who may stand in thy Sight, when thou art angry? Pf. lxxvi. 7.

I have mingled my Drink with weeping, because of thine Indignation, and thy Wrath. Pf. cii. 9, 10.

In my Wrath I smote thee. Isa. lx. 10.

He hath visited in his Anger. Job xxxv. 15.

GOD distributeth Sorrow in his Anger. ch. xxii. 17.

I have seen Affliction by the Rod of his Wrath. Lam. iii. 1.

I swear in my Wrath, they shall not enter into my Rest. Psa. xlcv. 11.

He casteth upon them the Fierceness of his Anger, Wrath, and Indignation—He made a Way to his Anger, he spared not their Soul from Death. Pf. lxxviii. 49, 50.

At his Wrath the Earth shall tremble. Jer. x. 10.

The Land is desolate because of his Anger. ch. xxv. 38.

By his Anger they are consumed. Job iv. 9.

The Lord shall swallow them up in his Wrath, and the Fire shall devour them. Psa. xxi. 9.

The Lord turned not from his Wrath. 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

For

For all this his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still. Isa. v. 25.

The Lord is slow to Anger, and of great Kindness; he will not always chide, neither keepeth he his Anger for ever. Psa. ciii. 8, 9.

The Lord turned from the Fierceness of his Anger. Josb. vii. 26.

In Wrath remember Mercy. Hab. iii. 2.

Tho' thou wast angry, thine Anger is turned away. Isa. xii. 1.

Many a Time turned he his Anger away. Psa. lxxvii. 38.

III. I will punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity. Isa. xiii. 11.

Behold the Lord cometh to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity. chap. xxvi. 21.

Is not Destruction to the Wicked, and a strange Punishment to the Workers of Iniquity? Job xxxi. 3.

I will punish you according to the Fruit of your Doings. Jer. xxi. 14.

I will punish you for all your Iniquities Amos iii. 2.

If you will not hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven Times more for your Sins. Lev. xxvi. 18.

I will punish all that oppress them. Isa. xxx. 20.

Now which am I to believe, God or Man ?

3. Your miserable Philosophy leads you, in the third Place, totally to deny the Scripture Doctrine of Justification. Indeed you do not appear to have the least Conception of the Matter ; no, not even to know what the Term *Justification* means. Accordingly you affirm,

“ *Salvation* (which as all Divines agree, includes both *Justification* and *Sanctification*) is nothing else but to be made like Christ^a.”

“ *Regeneration* is the whole of Man’s Salvation^b.”

“ *Redemption* is nothing else but the Life of God in the Soul^c.”

“ The *one only* Work of Christ as your Redeemer is, to raise into Life the smother’d Spark of Heaven in you^d.”

“ He is our *Atonement* and *Reconciliation* with God, because by him we are set again in our first State of Holiness^e.”

^a Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 53. ^b Part II. p. 37.

^c Part I. p. 79. ^d Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 45.

^e Part I. p. 10.

“ The

“ The *Atonement* of the Divine *Wrath* or *Justice*” (a wretched Solecism, on which your whole Reasoning for several Pages is built) “ and the extinguishing of Sin in the Creature, are only different Expressions of the same Thing.” (Nay the former is an Expression of nothing : it is flat Non-sense’).

“ All that Christ does as an *Atonement*, has no other Operation but that of *renewing* the fallen Nature of Man^s.”

Here are seven peremptory Assertions, But ’till they are fully proved, I cannot give up my Bible;

But you grow bolder and bolder ; and say, “ The Satisfaction of Christ is represented in all our Systems of Divinity, as a Satisfaction made to God, and the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as *that* which could only avail with God to have Mercy on Man. Nay, *what is still worse, if possible,* the Ground and Nature and Efficacy of this great Transaction between God and Man, is often explained by *Debtor* and *Creditor* ; *Man as having contracted a Debt with GOD, which he could not pay, and GOD as*

^t Part II, p. 86.

^s Page 106.

having a Right to insist upon the Payment of itⁿ."

"There is *no Wrath* in God, *no fictitious Atonement*, *no Folly of Debtor and Creditor*¹."

"What is still *worse*, if possible! *Folly of Debtor and Creditor!*" Surely I would not have spoken thus, unless I had been above the Son of God.

After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors. Matt. vi. 9, 12.

And Jesus said, There was a certain Creditor which had two Debtors. Luke vii. 41.

The kingdom of Heaven is liken'd to a King who would take account of his Servants. And one was brought unto him, who owed him ten thousand Talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold and all that he had. The Servant fell down, saying, Lord, have Patience with me. And his Lord was moved with Compassion, and forgave him the Debt. Yet afterwards, on his Unmercifulness to his Fellow-servant, he retracted that Forgiveness. And delivered him to the Tormentors 'till he should pay all that

¹ Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 91. ¹ Page 131.

was

was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you also, if you from your Heart forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases. Matt. xviii. 23, &c.

Is not *Man* here represented, as having contracted a Debt with *GOD*, which he cannot pay? And *GOD* as having, nevertheless, a Right to insist upon the Payment of it? And a Right, if he hath not to pay, of delivering him to the Tormentors? And is it not expressly asserted, That *God* will, in some Cases, claim this Right, and use it to the uttermost? Upon whom then lights this Imputation of Folly, and of what is still worse? *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge! Forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

But if the Son of *GOD* did not die, to atone for our Sins, what did he die for?

You answer, " he died,

1. " To extinguish our own Hell within us."

Nay, the Scripture represents this, not as the First, but the Second End of his Death.

2. " To shew that he was above the World, Death, Hell and Satan^b:"

^a Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 159. ^b P. 130, 131.

Where

Where is it written, That he died for this End? Could he not have done this, without dying at all?

3. " His Death was the *only possible way* of overcoming all the Evil that was in fallen Man ^d."

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

4. " Through this he got *Power*, to give the same Victory to all his Brethren of the Human Race ^e."

Had he not this *Power* before? otherwise, How was He *dñ*. He that is; *G O D* over all; *blessed for ever*?

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

As you seem never to have employed your Thoughts on *Justification* or *Redemption*, in the Scripture-Sense, I beg leave to subjoin a plain account thereof, wrote by a Woman of the last Century.

^d P. 129.

^e P. 132.

"Christ

“ Christ * hath acquired for us a Right to eternal Life by his Satisfaction and Merits alone. Neither our Repentance, nor Amendment, can be any Satisfaction for Sin. It is only *through his blood* that we have redemption. Eph. i. 7. This alone *cleanseth us from all sin*. 1 John i. 7. And here-
in was the love of GOD manifested towards, us, that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins. 1 John iv. 9, 10. So was the *LORD our Righteousness*. Jer. xxiii. 6. without which we could not have been justified. As man owed his Creator the perfect Obedience of his whole Life, or a Punishment proportioned to his Transgression, it was impossible he could satisfy Him, by a partial and imperfect Obedience. Neither could he *merit* any thing from Him, to whom he owed all things. There was need therefore of a Mediator, who could repair the immense Wrong they had done to the Divine Majesty, satisfy the Supreme Judge, who had pronounced the Sentence of Death against the Transgressors of his Law, suffer in the Place of his people, and *merit* for

* *Annae Mariae à Schurman* Ευαγγελία Παρ. II. p. 118, &c.

them

them Pardon, Holiness, and Glory. Accordingly he gave *himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and *by himself purged our Sins*. Heb. i. 3. *He loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD*. Eph. v. 2. So we read, *God raised him from the dead; who was delivered for our Offences; and raised again for our Justification*: Because our Surety's being discharged, by the Will and Act of the Judge himself, is a full Proof that he has paid our whole Debt."

2. "Nor is there any more sure way to the imitation of Christ, than Faith in Christ crucified, in him *who suffered for us, leaving us an Example*, that we might tread in his steps: who *died for us, while we were yet Enemies*, that we might be *justified by his blood*. Rom. v. 9. Yet it is true this Doctrine finds no place in those who are proud of Heart, who love their own *Reasonings*, and have no taste for *the sincere Milk of the Word*. But it is precious to them who feel the weight of their Sins, who know they are *by nature children of wrath*, and at the same time utterly incapable either of paying the Debt, of rising from the Death of Sin,

of

of conquering themselves, the World and the Devil, or of meriting eternal Life."

3. The Origin and Cause of our *Redemption* is, The ineffable Love of God the Father, who willed to redeem us by the Blood of his own Son. The Grace of the Son, who freely took our Curse upon him, and imparts his Blessing and Merits to us: And the Holy Spirit who communicates the Love of the Father, and the Grace of the Son to our Hearts.

“ When we speak of this, and of the *Satisfaction* of Christ, we speak of the inmost Mystery of the Christian Faith. Therefore all the Inventions of Men ought now to be kept at the utmost distance: Nor can any thing certain be established, without the express Authority of Scripture. And herein is offered first to our Consideration, the only begotten Son of God, as the Head of the *Redeemed*, the *righteous Servant* of God, who by the *Knowledge* of himself shall justify many. Isa. liii. 11. Him God hath constituted the *Surety* of that better *Covenant*. Heb. vii. 22. the *Covenant* of Grace. And how clearly is his Execution of this Office described in the fifty-third Chapter
of

of *Isaiab*? Where the Prophet describes him as *bearing our Grievs, or Sins, and carrying our Sorrows.* v. 4. *All we, says he, like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* v. 6. All Mankind have forsaken GOD, and placed their own Will upon his Throne, and so were liable to the highest Punishment, when the Mediator voluntarily interposed himself between them and the just Judge. And the incomprehensible Love of God that he might spare them, *spared not his own Son.* This is shewn in those Words, *The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* It was on this Account that *he was oppressed and afflicted; and brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter.* v. 7. while GOD *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21. This is express in the 9th and 10th verses—*He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him, when he made his soul an offering for sin.* How exactly do his own words agree with these? *I am the good Shepherd, and I lay*

lay down my life for the sheep. John x. 14, 15. For them *was he taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living.* v. 8. How doth God herein *commend his love towards us, in delivering up his own Son to die for us?* Yea, God *was pleased with bruising him,* when clothed with our flesh, and bearing our Sins, he manifested to Angels and Men his infinite Love of Divine Justice, 'till being *made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,* he satisfied its utmost Demand.

It was then God *was pleased to bruise him,* when *he made his soul an offering for sin.* He then appeared before the Judge of all, under *the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,* as the Apostle speaks. And therefore God was pleased to *condemn sin in the flesh,* Rom. viii. 3, 4. to *bruise him* who sustained the Person of Sinners. But this was only the Prelude of a glorious Victory. Therefore the Prophet adds, *He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the Pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand,* v. 10. After repeating, v. 11. the Sum of all; *He shall bear their iniquities,* he subjoins the Cause of his Reward, v. 12. *Because he poured out his*

his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: for he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

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

4. “From all which it appears, that Christ was not only a Pattern, but first and principally the Surety of the New Covenant, yea, a Sacrifice and a Victim, for the sins of his People; *whom GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.* Rom. iii. 25. And that precious Sacrifice offered on the Cross, is the very Center and Marrow of the Gospel. To that one offering whereby our great High-priest
bath

both perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14. all the ancient Sacrifices referred, as well as numberless other Types and Figures. All these, says the Apostle, were shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ, Col. ii. 17. He it was, who not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood entered into the Holiest, having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. xi. 12. In consequence of this we are accepted, thro' the offering of the body of Christ once for all, c. x. 10. In all the ancient Types and Figures, without shedding of blood, there was no remission: Which was intended to shew, there never could be any, without the Blood of the great Antetype: without that Grand, Propitiatory Sacrifice, which (like the Figure of it) was to be offered without the Gate.

“ Indeed the whole Worship of the Old Testament teaches nothing else but the Satisfaction made by the blood of Christ, and our Reconciliation with GOD thereby: Hence he is stiled *The Lamb of GOD that taketh away the sin of the world*; with a View to the Paschal Lamb and the other Lambs that were offered in Sacrifice: on
 E which

which account the Inhabitants of Heaven likewise give glory and sing a new song, because he hath redeemed them unto GOD by his blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, Rev. v. 9.

5. To this might be added the numerous Figures that occur in the Lives of the old Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings. But it may suffice to add to the preceding only two Testimonies more of the manner of our Redemption by a proper Sacrifice: The one, that of St. Paul, *Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*, Gal. iii. 13. The other, of St. Peter, *Who himself bore our Sins*, in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. From all this, abundantly appears, the Substitution of the Messiah in the Place of his People, thereby atoning for their Sins, and restoring them to the Favour of God.

“ These are the points which are so vehemently opposed, by *Socinus* and his Followers; who rob Christ of the principal Part of his priestly Office, and leave him only that of interceding for us by Prayer: As if any *Intercession* were worthy of Christ, which

which had not his full *Satisfaction* and propitiatory *Sacrifice* for its Foundation. Indeed these cannot be put asunder, as sufficiently appears from the Words cited before, *He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*: where the Holy Ghost closely joins his Intercession, with his Satisfaction made by Sacrifice. These and a thousand other solid Arguments that might be advanced in proof of this fundamental Doctrine, overturn all the Cavils which flow from corrupt *Reason*, which indeed are weak and thin as a Spider's Web."

I have dwelt the longer on this Head, because of its inexpressible Moment. For whether or no the Doctrine of *Justification by Faith* be, as all Protestants thought at the time of the Reformation, *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, a Doctrine without which there can be no *Christian Church*: Most certainly there can be none, where the whole Notion of *Justification* is ridiculed and exploded: Unless it be such a Church as includes, according to your Account, every Child of Man: Of which consequently Turks, Deists and Pagans are as real Members, as the most pious Christian under the

Sun. I cannot but observe, that this is the very Effence of Deïsm: No serious Infidel need contend for more: I would therefore no more set one of this Opinion to convert Deïsts, than I would set a Turk to convert Mahometans.

4. As every one that is justified is *born of GOD*, I am naturally led to consider in the next Place (so far as it is delivered in the Tracts now before us) your Doctrine of *the New Birth*.

“ In the Day that *Adam* eat of the Tree, *he died*: that is, his heavenly Spirit, with its heavenly Body, were extinguished. To make that heavenly Spirit and Body to be alive again in Man, this is *Regeneration*.”
O no; this is not; nor any thing like it. This is the poor, unscriptural Dream of a heated Imagination.

“ See the true Reason why only the Son of GOD *could be our Redeemer*. It is because he alone could be able to bring to life again that celestial Spirit and Body which had died in *Adam*.”

Not so: But he alone *could be our Redeemer*, because he alone, “ by that one Oblation of himself once offered, could

* Sp. of Pr. P. I. p. 9.

† Ibid.

make

make a sufficient *Sacrifice*, and *Satisfaction* for the Sins of the whole World.

“ See also why a Man must *be born again of Water and of the Spirit*. He must be born again of *the Spirit*, because *Adam's heavenly Spirit was lost*.” Nay, but because *Adam* had *lost* the inward *Image of GOD*, wherein he was created. And no less than the Almighty Spirit of GOD, could renew that Image in his Soul.

“ He must be *born of Water*, because that *heavenly Body* which *Adam* lost, was formed out of the Heavenly Materiality, which is called Water.”

Vain Philosophy ! The plain Meaning of the Expression, *Except a Man be born of Water*, is neither more nor less than this, *Except he be baptized*. And the plain Reason why he ought to be thus *born of Water* is because God hath appointed it. He hath appointed it, as an outward and invisible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace: Which Grace is, “ a Death unto Sin, and a *New Birth* unto Righteousness.”

“ The Necessity of our regaining *our first heavenly Body*, is the Necessity” (I presume

• Ibid.

• Ibid.

you mean, the Ground of the Necessity)
 “ of our eating the Body and Blood of
 Christ.”

Neither can I believe this, till I find it in
 the Bible. I am there taught to believe,
 That our “ spiritually receiving the Body
 and Blood of Christ,” which is most emi-
 nently done in the Lord’s Supper, is neces-
 sary to “ strengthen and refresh our Souls,
 as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.”

“ The Necessity of having again our
 first *heavenly Spirit* is shewn, by the Neces-
 sity of our being baptized with the Holy
 Ghost !”

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

“ Our *Fall is nothing else* but the falling
 of our Soul from its heavenly Body and Spi-
 rit, into a bestial Body and Spirit. Our
Redemption (you mean, our *New Birth*) is
nothing else but the regaining our *first Ange-
 lic Spirit and Body*.”

* I. 10.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

What

What an account is here of the Christian Redemption? How would Dr. *Tindal* have smiled at this? Where you say, Redemption is *nothing else*, but the Life of God in the Soul, you allow an essential Part of it. But here, you allow it to be *nothing else* but that which is no Part of it at all: *Nothing else* but a Whim, a Madman's Dream, a Chimera, a mere Non-entity!

This (*Angelic Spirit and Body*) "in Scripture is called our *New* or *Inward Man* ^b."

The *inward Man* in Scripture means one thing, the *New Man*, another. The former means; *the Mind* opposed to the Body: *Tho' our outward Man, our Body, perish, yet the inward Man, the Mind or Soul, is renewed Day by Day.* 2 Cor. iv. 16. The latter means *Universal Holiness: Put off the old Man, which is corrupt; and put on the New Man, which after GOD is created in Righteousness and true Holiness.* Eph. iv. 22, 24. But neither does the one nor the other ever mean, "This angelic Spirit and Body."

You yourself know better, what the *New Birth* is. You describe it better, though

^b Ibid.

still with amazing Queerness of Language, where you say,

“ Man hath the Light and Water of an outward Nature, to quench the Wrath of his own Life, and the Light and Meekness of Christ, as a *Seed born* in him, to bring forth anew the Image of God.”

But it is not strange, that you speak so confusedly and darkly, as you generally do, of the *New Birth*, seeing you have no conception at all of that *Faith*, whereby we are *born again*.

This abundantly appears from your frank Declaration, “ We are neither *saved by Faith* nor by Works.” Flatly contrary to the Declaration of St. Paul, *By Grace we are saved through Faith*: And from your other Declaration, “ Faith and Works are only *preparatory* to the *New Birth*.” Flatly contrary to the Declaration of St. John, *Whosoever believeth is born of GOD*.

To put the matter out of dispute, you declare that you mean by *Faith*, “ a *Desire* to be one with Christ.”

Again. “ The *Desire* of turning to God

¹ Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 36. ² Ibid. ³ Part I. p. 50.

is the coming of Christ into the Soul. *This Faith* will save thee ^a."

So in your Judgment, *Saving Faith* is, "a *Desire* of coming to God, or of being one with Christ." I know the contrary from Experience. I had this *Desire* many Years before I even knew what saving Faith was.

Faith is so far from being only *this Desire* that is no *Desire* at all. It differs from all *Desire*, *tota genere*, although doubtless all good *Desires* accompany it. It is, according to St. Paul, *An ἰσχυρος*, an *Evidence* or *Conviction* (which is totally different from a *Desire*) of *Things not seen*; A supernatural, a divine *Evidence* and *Conviction* of the things which God hath revealed in his Word; Of this in particular, that the Son of God hath loved *me* and given himself for *me*. Whosoever hath this Faith is *born of GOD*. Whosoever thus believeth is saved; and if he *endure* therein *to the end*, shall be *saved* everlastingly.

The *Process* of *this Work* in the Soul, of the present Salvation which is through Faith, you likewise describe confusedly and obscurely. The Sum of what you say is this:

“ The painful *Sense* of what you are, kindled into a working State of Sensibility by the Light of God, is the Light and Fire from whence the *Spirit of Prayer* proceeds. In its first kindling nothing is found, but Pain, Wrath, and Darkness. And therefore its first Prayer is *all Humility*.”

Would it not be more intelligible, if one had said, “ The convincing Spirit of God, gives you to see and feel, that you are a poor, undone, guilty, helpless Sinner. At the same time, he incites you to cry for help, who is *mighty to save*.” This is true. But it is not true, that *in the first kindling* of this Fire, in plain terms, during the first Convictions, “ nothing is found but *Pain, Wrath, and Darkness*.” Very often there are found even in the first Conviction, sweet Gleams of *Light*, Touches of *Joy*, of *Hope*, and of *Love*, mixt with Sorrow and Fear. Much less is it true, that the *first Prayer* of an awakening Sinner is *all Humility*. On the contrary, a Sinner newly awakened, has always more or less Confidence in himself, in what he *is*, or *has*, or *does*, and *will do*, which is not *Humility*, but downright *Pride*. And this mingles itself with all his Prayer,

° Sp. of Prayer, Part II. p. 172.

° Ibid.

till

till the Day-star is just rising in His Heart.

You add, "This Prayer is met by the Divine Love, and changed into Hymns and Songs and Thanksgivings." It is so, when *being justified by Faith, we have Peace with GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ.* "This State of Fervour melts away all earthly Passions and Affections, and leaves no Inclination in the Soul, but to delight in God alone." It is certain, this is the genuine Effect of *the Love of God shed abroad in the Heart*; which Expression of St. Paul, I suppose means the same with *this State of Fervour.* "Then its Prayer changes again, and continually stands in *Fulness of Faith, in Purity of Love, in absolute Resignation, to do and be what and how his Beloved pleaseth.* This is the last State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is our *highest Union with GOD, in this Life.*

Assuredly it is: *Fulness of Faith, beholding with open Face the Glory of the Lord, Purity of Love, free from all Mixture of its contrary, yielding the whole Heart to God; absolute Resignation, excluding every*

^p Page 172.

^q Ibid.

^r Page 173.

degree

degree of Self-will, sacrificing every Thought Word and Work to GOD. But do we *change* directly, from our *First Love*, into the highest *Union* with GOD? Surely not. There is an intermediate State between that of *Babes in Christ*, and that of *Fathers*. You yourself are very sensible there is; although you here speak *as if* they were not.

You go on. "People who have long dwelt in this *Fervor*, are frightened when *Coldness* seizes upon them:" that is, when they lose it, when their Love grows cold. And certainly, well they may, if this *Fervor* was to bring them to "Fulness of Faith, Purity of Love, and absolute Resignation." Well they may be affrighted, if that *Fervor* be lost, before "it has done its Work."

Indeed they might be affrighted, when it is not lost, if that which follows be true. "*Fervor* is good and ought to be loved; but *Distress* and *Coldness* are better." It brings the Soul *nearer* to GOD than the *Fervor* did."

• Page 174.

• Page 176.

• Page 175.

The

The *Fervor*, you said, "brought the Soul to its *bigbest Union* with GOD in this Life." Can *Coldness* do more? Can it bring us to an Union higher than the *bigbest*?

To explain this you say, "The *Fervor* made the Soul delight in GOD. But it was too much an *own Delight*. It was a fancied *Self-boliness*, and occasioned Rest and Satisfaction in itself, in a *spiritual Self*." Either *Fervor* does bring us to *Purity* of Love, and *absolute* Resignation, or not. To say, it does not, contradicts what you said before; to say it does, contradicts what you say now. For if it does, we cannot say, "*Coldness* does the Work which *Terror* did, in an *higher Degree*."

I should not insist so long on these glaring Inconsistences, were not the Doctrine you are here labouring to support, absolutely inconsistent with that of St. *Paul*, and naturally productive of the most fatal Consequences. St. *Paul* asserts, *the present kingdom of GOD* in the Soul is *Righteousness and Peace in the Holy Ghost*. He continually teaches, That these which God hath joined, Man ought not to put asunder: That

▪ Ibid.

Peace

Peace and Joy should never be separated from *Righteousness*, being the Divine Means both of preserving and increasing it, and that we may, yea, ought to *rejoice evermore, till the God of Peace sanctifies us wholly*. But if these Things are so, then "*Distress and Coldness are not better*" than fervent Love and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

Again, The Doctrine, that is better and more profitable for the Soul, to lose its sense of the Love of God than to keep it, is not only Unscriptural, but naturally attended with the most fatal Consequences. It directly tends to obstruct, if not destroy the Work of God in the Heart, by causing Men to *blefs themselves* in those Ways, which damp the *Fervor* of their Affections; and to imagine they are considerably advanced in Grace, when they have *grieved, yea, quenched the Spirit*. Nay, but let all who now feel the Love of God in their Hearts, and *walk in the Light, as he is in the Light*, labour by every possible means to keep themselves in the Love of GOD. Let them be *ever fervent in Spirit*. Let them *rejoice evermore*, and stir up the Gift of God, which is in them. And if at any time, "*Coldness* seizes

seizes upon them," let them be assured, they have *grieved the Spirit of GOD*. Let them be affrighted: Let them fear lest they sink lower and lower; yea, into total *Deadness* and *Hardness* of Heart. At the Peril of their Souls, let them not rest in *Darkness*, but examine themselves, search out their *Spirits*, cry out vehemently to GOD, and not cease till he restores the Light of his Countenance.

5. If this Doctrine of the Profitableness of *Coldness* above Fervor, directly tends to make Believers *easy*, while they are sliding back into Unbelief, you have another which tends as directly to make them *easy* who never believed at all, I mean, that of *Christ in every Man*. What you advance on this Head, I desire next to consider, as the Importance of it requires.

"The *Birth of Christ* is already begun in every one. Jesus is already *within thee* (whoever thou art) *living, stirring, calling, knocking* at the Door of thy Heart."

"Every Man has *Christ* in his Spirit, lying there as *in a State of Insensibility and Death*."

* Sp. of Pr. Part I. p. 55. * Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 34.
But

But he is living, for all that. And though *in a state of Insensibility*, he is *stirring, calling, knocking* at the Door of the Heart!

“*Something of Heaven*” (you use this Phrase as equivalent with *Christ*) lies in every Soul in a State of *Inactivity* and *Death*.”

“All the holy Nature, Tempers, and Spirit of Christ, *lie hid* as a Seed in thy Soul.”

But are they active or unactive! *Living* and *stirring*, or in a State of *Insensibility* and *Death*?

“Thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, while all the Peace and Joy of God are within thee.”

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

† Page 35. * Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 68. * P. 74.

“ See here the extent of the Catholic Church of Christ! It takes in all the World .”

So Jews, Mahometans, Deists, Heathens, are all Members of the *Church of Christ!* Should we not add *Devils* too? Seeing these also are to dwell with us in Heaven.

“ Poor Sinner, Christ dwelleth in the *Center*, the *Fund* or *Bottom* of thy Soul .”

Exquisite Nonsense! Either the *Center*, the *Top* or *Bottom* of a Spirit.

“ When Adam fell, this *Center* of his Soul became a Prisoner in an earthly Animal. But from the Moment *GOD spoke Christ into Adam*, all the Treasures of the Divine Nature, the Light and Spirit of God came again into Man, into the *Center* of his Soul .”

I cannot find in the Bible, when that was; when *GOD spoke Christ into Adam*.

We come now to the Proofs of these strong Assertions.

And 1. “ No Faith could ever begin, unless every man had Christ in him .”

² P. 56.

^a P. 59.

^b P. 60.

^c Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 34.

· This Proposition needs just as much Proof itself, as that which it is brought to prove.

2. " Unless the Remains of the perfect Love of God were in every Man, it would be impossible he should ever love God at all^d."

Why so? Cannot God give his Love this Moment, to one who never loved him before?

3. " Unless Christ was hidden in the Soul, there could not be the least beginning of Man's Salvation. For what could begin to desire Heaven, unless *something* of Heavens was hid in the Soul^e?"

What could? Why any Soul, which had *nothing but Hell* in it before, the Moment Grace was infused from above.

4. " The ten Commandments lay hid in Man's Souls." (How?) " till called into Sensibility by writing them on Stone. Just so Christ lies in the Soul, till awakened by the *Mediatorial Office* of the Holy Jesus^f."

This is only Assertion still, not Proof. But what do you mean by *The Mediatorial*

^d P. 38.

^e P. 35.

^f P. 37.

Office of Christ? And how is “Christ awakened by the *Mediatorial Office* of the Holy Jesus?”

5. “The Sea cannot be moved by any other Wind than that which had its Birth from the Sea itself^s.”

I think, it can. I have seen it “moved by a Wind, which had its Birth from the Land.”

6. “The Musician cannot make his Instrument give any other Melody than that which *lies hid* in it, as its own *Inward State*^b.”

Did the Tune then *lie hid* in the Trumpet, before the Trumpeter blew? And was *this* Tune, or another, or all that ever were played on it, the *Inward State* of the Trumpet?

“No more can the Mind have any Grief or Joy, but that which is *from itself*ⁱ.”

An unhappy Comparison! For the Instrument can have no Melody or Sound at all *from itself*: And most unhappily applied to the Operations of God upon the Souls

^s P. 40.

^b P. 42.

ⁱ P. 43.

of Men. For has GOD no more Power over my Soul, than I have over a musical Instrument?

These are your Arguments to prove that *Christ is in every man*; a Blessing which St. Paul thought was peculiar to *Believers*. He said, *Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates* (Unbelievers) You say, *Christ is in you*, whether ye be Reprobates or no. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, saith the Apostle. Yea, but "*every man*, saith Mr. Law, *hath the Spirit of GOD*. The Spirit of Christ is in *every Soul*.*" *He that hath not the Son of GOD hath not life*, saith St. John. But Mr. Law saith, *Every man hath the Son of GOD*. Sleep on then ye Sons of Belial, and take your rest: Ye are all safe: For *he that hath the Son hath life*.

There can hardly be any Doctrine under Heaven more agreeable to Flesh and Blood; Nor any which more directly tends, to prevent the very Dawn of Conviction, or at least to hinder its deepening in the Soul, and coming to a sound Issue. None more naturally tends to keep Men asleep in Sin, and to lull asleep those who begin to be

* Spirit of Pr. P. I, p. 63.

awakened.

awakened. Only persuade one of this, “*Christ* is already in thy Heart; Thou hast now the *Inspiration* of his Spirit: All the *Peace* and *Joy* of GOD are within thee, yea, all the *Holy Nature*, *Tempers*, and *Spirit* of *Christ*.” And you need do no more: The Siren-Song quiets all his Sorrow and Fear. As soon as you have sewed this Pillow to his Soul, he sinks back into the Sleep of Death.

VI. But you have made an ample Amends for this, by providing so short and easy a Way to Heaven: Not a long, narrow, troublesome, round about Path, like that described in the Bible: But one that will as compendiously save the Soul, as Dr. — *Pill and Drop* heal the Body: A Way so plain, that they who follow it need no Bible, no Human Teaching, no Outward Means whatever; being every one able to stand alone; every one sufficient for himself!

“The *First Step* is, To turn wholly from yourself and to give up yourself wholly unto GOD¹.”

If it be, no Flesh living shall be saved. How grievously do we stumble at the

¹ Spirit of Prayer, Part H. p. 22.

Threshold? Do you seriously call this, *The First Step*? “To turn wholly from myself, and give up myself wholly unto God”? Am I then to *step first* on the highest Round of the Ladder? Not unless you turn it upside down. The Way to Heaven would be short indeed, if the *first* and the *last* Step were all one: If we were to step as far the Moment we set out, as we can do till we enter into Glory.

But what do you mean by *giving up myself* to God? You answer, “Every sincere Wish and *Desire* after Christian Virtues, is *giving up yourself* to Him, and the very *Perfection of Faith*.”

Far, very far from it; I know from the Experience of a thousand Persons, as well as from Scripture, and the very Reason of the Thing, That a Man may have *sincere Desires* after all these, long before he attains them. He may *sincerely wish*, to give himself up to God; long before he is able so to do. He may *desire* this, not only before he has the *Perfection*, but before he has any Degree of *saving Faith*.

More marvellous still is that which follows, “You may easily and immediately, by

▪ Spirit of Love, P. II. p. 217.

the

the mere turning of your Mind, have all these Virtues, Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God °."

Who *may*? Not I. Not you. Not any that is born of a Woman: as is proved by the daily Experience of all, that know what Patience, Meekness, or Resignation mean.

But how shall I know whether I have Faith or not? "I will give you an infallible Touchstone. Retire from all Conversation only for a Month. Neither write, nor read, nor debate any thing with yourself. Stop all the former Workings of your Heart and Mind, and stand all this Month in Prayer to God. If your Heart cannot *give itself up in this manner to Prayer*, be fully assured you are an *Infidel* °."

If this be so, the *Infidels* are a goodly Company! If every man be of that Number, who cannot "stop all the former Workings of his Heart and Mind, and stand thus in Prayer to God for a Month together."

But I would gladly know, By what Authority you give us this *Touchstone*? And

° P. 212.

° Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 163.

how you prove it to be *infallible*? I read nothing like it in the Oracles of God. I cannot find one Word there, of “refraining from all Conversation, from Writing, and Reading for a Month.” (I fear, you make no Exception, in favour of Public Worship, or Reading the Word of God.) Where does the Bible speak of this? Of “stopping for a Month, or a Day, all the former Workings of my Heart and Mind? Of refraining from all Converse with the Children of God, and from reading his Word? It would be no wonder should any man make this unscriptural (if not anti-scriptural) Experiment, if Satan were permitted to work in him a *strong Delusion*, so that he should *believe a lie*.

Nearly related to this Touch-stone is the Direction which you give elsewhere. “Stop all Self-activity; be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to the inward Light.”

But beware *the light which is in thee be not darkness*; as it surely is, if it agree not with *the law and the testimony*—“Open thy Heart to all its Impressions”—If they agree with

that truly infallible Touchstone. Otherwise regard no Impression of any kind, at the Peril of thy Soul — “wholly stopping the Workings of thy own Reason and Judgment.” I find no such Advice in the Word of God, And I fear they who stop the Workings of their Reason, lie the more open to the Workings of their Imagination.

There is abundantly greater Danger of this when we fancy we have no longer need to “be taught of Man.” To this your late Writings directly lead. One who admires them will be very apt to cry out, “I have found all that I need know of God, of Christ, of myself, of Heaven, of Hell, of Sin, of Grace, and of Salvation.” And the rather, because you yourself affirm roundly, “when once we apprehend the All of God, and our own Nothingness” (which a Man may persuade himself he does, in less than four and twenty Hours) “it brings a kind of Infallibility into the Soul in which it dwells: all that is vain, and false, and deceitful, is forced to vanish and fly before it.” Agreeably to which you tell

‡ Part II. p. 4.

† Part I. p. 95.

your

your Convert, " You have no Questions to ask of any body '." And if, notwithstanding this, he will ask, " But how am I to keep up the Flame of Love ?" You answer, " I wonder you should want to know this. Does a blind, or sick, or lame Man want to know, how he should *desire* Sight, Health, or Limbs " ?" No: but he wants to know, how he should *attain*, and how he should *keep* them. And he who has *attained* the Love of God, may still want to know, How he shall keep it. And he may still enquire, " May I not take my own Passions or the Suggestions of Evil Spirits for the Workings of the Spirit of God ?" To this you answer, " Every Man knows, when he is governed by the Spirit of Wrath, Envy or Covetousness, as *easily* and as *certainly* as he knows when he is hungry ." Indeed he does not ; neither as *easily*, nor as *certainly*. Without great Care, he may take Wrath to be pious Zeal, Envy to be virtuous Emulation ; and Covetousness to be Christian Prudence, or laudable Frugality. " Now the Knowledge of the Spirit of God in yourself is as perceptible "

† Sp. of Love, P. II. p. 218. " Sp. of Pr. P. II. p. 165.

‡ P. 198.

γ Ibid.

as Covetousness. Perhaps so; for this is as difficultly perceptible, as any Temper of the Human Soul—"And liable to no more Delusion"—Indeed it need not: For this is liable to ten thousand Delusions.

You add, "His Spirit is more distinguishable from all other Spirits, than any of your natural Affections are from one another." Suppose Joy and Grief. Is it more distinguishable from all other Spirits, than these are from one another? Did any Man ever mistake Grief for Joy? No, not from the beginning of the World. But did none ever mistake Nature for Grace? Who will be so hardy as to affirm this?

But you set your Pupil as much above the being taught by *Books*, as being taught by *Men*. "Seek, say you, for Help no other Way, neither from *Men*, nor *Books*, but wholly leave yourself to God^b."

But how can a Man "leave himself wholly to God," in the total Neglect of his Ordinances? The Old Bible way is, To "leave ourselves wholly to God," in the constant Use of all the Means he hath or-

^a P. 199.

^b Spirit of Love, P. II. p. 225.

dained.

dained. And I cannot yet think, the New is better, though you are fully persuaded it is. "There are two Ways, you say, of attaining Goodness and Virtue; the one by *Books* or the *Ministry* of Men, the other by an inward Birth. The former is only in order to the latter." This is most true, That all the externals of Religion, are in order to the Renewal of our Soul in Righteousness and true Holiness. But it is not true, that the External Way is one, and the Internal Way, another. There is but one Scriptural Way, wherein we receive Inward Grace, through the Outward Means which God hath appointed.

Some might think that when you advised, "Not to seek Help from Books," You did not include the Bible. But you clear up this, where you answer the Objection, of your not esteeming the Bible enough. You say, "How could you more magnify *John the Baptist*, than by going from his Teaching, to be taught by that Christ, to whom he directed you? Now the Bible can have no other Office or Power, than to direct you to Christ. How then can you more magnify the Bible than by going

going from its Teaching, to be taught by Christ?" So you set Christ and the Bible in flat Opposition to each other! And is this the Way we are to learn of him? Nay, but we are taught of Him, not by *going from* the Bible, but by keeping close to it. Both by the Bible and by Experience we know, that his Word and his Spirit act in Connexion with each other. And thus it is, that by Christ continually teaching and strengthening him through the Scripture, *the man of GOD is made perfect, and thoroughly furnished for every good Word and Work.*

According to your Veneration for the Bible, is your Regard for Public Worship and for the Lord's Supper, "Christ, you say, is *the Church or Temple of GOD* within thee. There *the Supper* of the Lamb is kept. When thou art well grounded in *this inward Worship*, thou wilt have learned to live unto God *above Time and Place*. For every day will be *Sunday* to thee; and wherever thou goest, thou wilt have a *Priest*, a *Church*, and an *Altar* along with thee^c."

The plain Inference is, Thou wilt not

^c Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 73.

need

need to make any difference between *Sunday* and other Days. Thou wilt need no other *Church* than that which thou hast always along with thee; no other *Supper, Worship, Priest, or Altar*. Be well grounded in *this Inward Worship*, and it supercedes all the rest.

This is right-pleasing to Flesh and Blood, and I could most easily believe it, if I did not believe the Bible. But that teaches me, *inwardly to worship God, as at all Times, and in all Places, so particularly on his own Day, in the Congregation of his People, at his Altar, and by the Ministry of those his Servants, whom he hath given for this very thing, for the perfecting of the saints, and with whom he will be to the End of the World.*

Extremely dangerous therefore is this *other gospel*, which leads quite wide of the Gospel of Christ. And what must the Consequence be, if we thus *break, yea and teach Men so, not one only, neither, the least of his Commandments?* Even that we *shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* God grant, this may not fall on you or me!

7. However,

7. However, whether we have a Place in Heaven or not, you are very sure, we shall have none in Hell. For there is no Hell in *rerum Naturá*; no such Place in the Universe. You declare this, over and over again, in great Variety of Expression: It may suffice to mention two or three. "Hell is no Penalty prepared or inflicted by God ^a." "Damnation is only, that which springs up within you ^b." "Hell and Damnation are nothing but the various Operations of Self ^c."

I rather incline to the Account published a few Years ago, by a wise and pious Man, (the late Bishop of *Cork*) where he is speaking of the Improvement of Human Knowledge by Revelation. Some of his Words are, "Concerning Future Punishments, we learn from Revelation only, 1. That they are both for *Soul* and *Body*, which are distinguished in Scripture by *the Worm that dieth not*, and *the fire which never shall be quenched*: And accordingly we are bid to fear him who is able to destroy both *body* and

^a Spirit of Prayer, Part II. p. 33.

^b Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 47.

^c Spirit of Prayer, Part I, p. 79.

soul

soul in bell." Upon which I shall only remark, That whereas we find by Experience, the Body and Soul in this Life are not capable of suffering the Extremity of Pain and Anguish at the same time, inso-much that the greatest Anguish of Mind is lost and diverted by acute and pungent Pain of Body : Yet we learn from Scripture, That in *Hell* the wicked will be subject to extreme Torments of both together ⁴."

2. " That the chief Cause of their eternal Misery will be, an eternal Exclusion from the beatific Vision of God. This Exclusion seems to be the only Punishment to which we can now conceive a *pure Spirit* liable. And according as all intelligent Beings are at a *less* or *greater* Distance from this Fountain of all Happiness, so they are necessarily more or less miserable or happy."

3. That one Part of those Punishments will be by *Fire*, than which we have not any Revelation more express and positive. And as it is an instance of great *Goodness* in God, that the Joys of Heaven are re-

⁴ P. 351.

presented

presented to us, under the *figurative* Images of Light and Glory and a Kingdom, and that the Substance shall exceed the utmost of our Conception: So it is an Argument of his strict *Justice*, that Future Punishments are more *literally threatened* and *foretold*.”

4. “The *Eternity* of these Punishments is revealed as plainly, as Words can express it. And the Difficulty of that Question, “What proportion *endless Torments* can bear to *momentary Sins*,” is quite removed by considering, that the Punishments denounced are not Sanctions *entirely arbitrary*, but are withal so many previous *Warnings* or *Declarations* of the *Natural Tendency* of Sin itself. So that an unrepenting Sinner must be miserable in another Life by a Necessity of Nature. Therefore he is not capable of Mercy; since there never can be an alteration of his Condition, without such a Change of the whole Man, as would put the natural and settled Order of the Creation out of Course†.”

Doubtless this eminent Man (whose Books on the *Human Understanding*, and on

† Page 351.

Divine Analogy, I would earnestly recommend to all who either in whole or in part deny the Christian Revelation) grounded his judgment both of the Nature and Duration of future Punishments on these and the like Passages of Scripture.

If we sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for Sins; but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries. He that despised Moses' Law, died without Mercy: Of how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of GOD?—For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. It is a fearful Thing, to fall into the Hands of the living God. Heb. x. 26, 31.

And let not any who live and die in their Sins, vainly hope to escape his Vengeance. For if GOD spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkness, to be reserved unto Judgment—The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished. 2. Pet. ii. 4—9. In that Day, peculiarly stiled *The Day of the Lord,*

Lord, they that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake: Some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt: Dan. xii. 2. Among the latter will all those be found, who are now by their obstinate Impenitence, Treasuring up to themselves wrath against the Day of Wrath and Revelation of the righteous Judgement of GOD: Who will then render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil. Rom. ii. 5—9. He hath declared the very Sentence which he will then pronounce on all the workers of Iniquity, Depart, ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devils and his Angels. Matt. xxv. 41. And in that Hour it will be executed: Being cast into outer Darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of Teeth, ver. 30. they will be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of his Power: 2 Thess. i. 9. A Punishment not only without End, but likewise without Intermision. For when once they are cast into that Furnace of Fire, that Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone, the worm gnawing their Soul dieth not, and the Fire tormenting their Body is not quenched. So that they have no Rest Day

or Night; but the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

Now thus much cannot be denied, That these Texts speak *as if* there were really such a Place as Hell, *as if* there were a real Fire there, and *as if* it would remain for ever. I would then ask but one plain Question. If the Case is not so, why did God speak *as if* it was? Say you, "To affright Men from Sin?" What, by Guile? By Dissimulation? By hanging out false Colours? Can you possibly ascribe this to the God of Truth? Can you believe it of him? Can you conceive the most High dressing up a Scare-crow; as we do to fright Children! Far be it from him. If there be then any such Fraud in the Bible, the Bible is not of God. And indeed this must be the Result of all: If there be *no unquenchable Fire, no everlasting Burnings*, there is no Dependance on those Writings, wherein they are so expressly asserted; nor of the *Eternity* of Heaven any more than of Hell. So that if we give up the one, we must give up the other. No Hell, no Heavn, no Revelation!

In vain you strive to supply the Place of this, by putting *Purgatory* in its Room; by saying, "These Virtues must have their
perfect

perfect Work in you, if not before, yet certainly *after Death* [†].” “ Every thing else must be taken from you *by Fire*, either here or hereafter [‡].” Poor, broken Reed! Nothing will “be taken from you” by that Fire which is *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, but all Rest, all Joy, all Comfort, all Hope. For *the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*.

I have now, Sir, delivered my own Soul. And I have used great Plainness of Speech; such as I could not have prevailed on myself to use to one whom I so much respect, on any other Occasion. If I have misapprehended any of your Sentiments, I am desirous of better Information, and most ready to believe you, if you disclaim any of those opinions which I have imputed to you. I say, to believe *you*, who are best able to answer for yourself; and whatever *you* say, I shall consider with all Attention. What others, especially nameless Writers, may say, I cannot promise either to read or answer.

O that your latter Works may be more and greater than your first! Surely they

[†] Spirit of Love, Part II. p. 232. [‡] Ibid.

wou'd, if you could ever be persuaded, to study, instead of the Writings of *Tauler* and *Behmen*, those of *St. Paul*, *James*, *Peter*, and *John* : To spue out of your Mouth and out of your Heart that *vain Philosophy*, and *speak* neither higher nor lower Things, neither more nor less than *the Oracles of GOD*: To renounce, despise, abhor all the high-flown Bombast, all the unintelligible Jargon of the Mysticks, and come back to the plain Religion of the Bible, *We love him, because he first loved us*. I am, Reverend Sir,

Your Servant for Christ's Sake,

London,
Jan. 6, 1756.

JOHN WESLEY.

F I N I S.