

Volume 12

William Huntington

Forty Stripes Save None For Satan

PREFACE.

CHRISTIAN READER:

I THINK I may call Satan God's ape; for whatsoever the Almighty does from heaven above, the devil tries to imitate on earth beneath—only God intends our salvation, and Satan our destruction. If God sends his angels as ministering spirits, to minister to them that are heirs of salvation, Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, to imitate them. God sent Moses and Aaron—Satan sent Jannes and Jambres to counterfeit their works. When God sent persons in the character of prophets into the world, Satan sent four hundred prophets to one. When God order Solomon to build him a temple, the devil strewed the heathen world with temples. When God sent priests, Satan sent Cheanarims, Zeph. i. 4. When God ordered sacrifices for Israel, then the Gentiles were set to offer sacrifices to devils. When God sent the highest officers

(called apostles) into the church, then Satan sent false apostles, transformed as the ministers of righteousness. And, soon after God had set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, the devil gave the pope his seat and great authority at Rome. If the Lord makes his ministers burning and shining lights, Satan sends others to counterfeit them with his rays. "Take heed," says the Lord, "lest the light that is in thee be darkness; if it be, how great is that darkness!" Luke xi. 35. If God blesses his children with the full assurance of faith, Satan sets the fool to rage and be confident, in imitation of them. And, if any be commissioned by the Lord to preach, to cast out devils, and work miracles, workers of iniquity plead that they have done the same,— "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?" Matt. vii. 22. If love to the brethren constrains the primitive saints to sell all that they have to supply the needs of the righteous, Satan fills the hearts of Ananias and Sapphire to imitate them, only to keep back part of the price. If God enables his servants to seal the truth that they have preached with their blood, it is allowed that a child of Satan may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burnt, and yet not have charity. If a servant of God is liberal to the poor, and a rebuker of iniquity, Satan's children are up with them—"to what purpose is all this waste? this ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor." John xii. 5. If God orders lambs and kids for sacrifices, the devil orders children to be burnt alive to him—an infant being a sweeter morsel to a devil than the firstlings of the flock. "They sacrificed their children to devils." Psalm cvi. 37. "And made them pass through the fire to Molock." Jer. xxxii: 85. If God raises the widow's son, and the son of the Shunammite, the devil imitates Him who is the resurrection and the life, and pretends to bring up Samuel. If God grants his children fellowship with himself and his dear Son, the lion of the bottomless pit ceases to rage and roar, and becomes a familiar spirit. If prophets predict future events by the Spirit of

prophesy, Satan's children divine, and pretend to the same by enchantments, astrology, and conjuration. If God condescends to espouse souls to himself as a husband, Satan turns wooer and whoremonger—"and they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring." Lev. xvii. 7. If "God keeps that man in perfect peace whose mind stayed upon him," Satan keeps possession of his palace and his goods in peace also. If the children of God are joyful, the way-side hearers are the same. If a saint departs this life in freedom from fear and bondage, the offspring of Satan are up with him—"The wicked have no bands in their death, their strength is firm." Psalm lxxiii. 4. If God orders Moses to smite the waters and turn them into blood, Satan orders his magicians to do the same. Exod. vii. 22. God calls for frogs, Satan's instruments imitate them. Exod. viii. 7. God orders dust to be turned into lice, and Satan tried to imitate that; but God put his hook in his jaws, and baffled the king of darkness, and all his princes, in the open court of Egypt, by a louse.

Then my reader may say—What are we to do with this arch-hypocrite? Why, the Lord has promised to give us "power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and that nothing shall by any means hurt us." Luke x. 19. Nevertheless, we must use Aaron's rod—it is still in the hand of our great High Priest, who is the hope of his people and the strength of the children of Israel. The rod of power, in the hand of Aaron, swallowed up all the rods of the magicians. And the rod of the Lord's strength, that was sent out of Zion, is the gospel, by which he rules in the midst, of Jerusalem: this rod is the word of Jesus—"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Isaiah xi. 4.

Satan deceived the whole world with two lies—Ye shall not die, but be as gods. This entitled him to the honour of being

the father of lies. And there is nothing Satan labours harder at than to get poor souls to trust in a lie; for God has declared that he who goes down to the grave with a lie in his hand cannot deliver his soul; nor shall any thing enter into the heavenly Jerusalem that loveth and maketh a (doctrinal) lie. Hence the Saviour's caution, "Take heed how ye hear;" and his charge, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown;" and his promise, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the whole earth," Rev, iii. 10. There is no playing at the hole of this asp, but in faith; nor any other way of belabouring Satan, but by the rod of truth; nor of being more than a conqueror, but by sovereign love. Hence you read, "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" and again, "we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us." But we must be valiant for truth, and smite every liar with this rod as far as God is pleased by his Spirit to discover truth to us. The father of lies hates the truth, and the king of darkness hates divine light.

I have in this little treatise, reader, been hunting an old heresy, with which I was pestered and tormented many years ago: the seeds of which have lately been revived; and some few, who are known, to me, are secretly leavened with it. I call it a heresy, for such God discovered it to me long since. I have no other end in view, in this work, than to disentangle those that fear God, who may be caught in this snare: as to others, if God gives them up to a strong delusion, they are sure to be steadfast till they lift up their eyes beyond the grave. I have stuck as close to the scriptures as I could in pointing out the error, and have set truth against it as plainly, as clearly, and made the matter as intelligible, as God has been pleased to enable me; though I expect little else but reproach for my pains: nevertheless it is the truth, and God himself revealed it

to me. And I will appeal to every Sabellian's conscience, that holds the lie, for confirmation of this truth—that they never got their doctrine from God upon their knees, as I got mine. They cannot say, with Paul, that their doctrine is not after men.—"For I received it not of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; for it pleased God to reveal his Son in me," Gal. i. 12:16. But alas, alas! those that know not the profound deceits of the human heart, and the depths of Satan, believe every word; and no wonder, for they receive not the word at God's mouth, Job xxii. 22.

Reader, carefully attend to what I have written; and beg earnestly of God, before thou read it, to shew thee whether I am right or wrong: then thou wilt act a safe part with thyself, and an honourable part with me. I am earnestly contending for the doctrine of the TRINITY; the greatest and grandest article of "the faith that was once delivered to the saints," and the most weighty and most dangerous matter to be trifled with in all the book of God. That to cause the simple soul to err in the Fountain is the devil's master-piece I know, by sad experience of the perpetual buffetings of Satan for some years; for which villany he is here beaten with rods.

Reader, that God would bless thee and keep thee, cause his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, lift up the light of his countenance upon thee and give thee peace, is the prayer and desire of

Thy willing servant in the Lord Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

Nov. 1792.

TO W.O. JOHNS,

AND THOSE IN CONNECTION WITH HIM AT

CHATHAM, IN KENT.

SIR,

A few days ago a letter was put into my hands, which had been sent to a Mr. Main, toyman, in Bond-street (who stands in connection with us), relative to the death of Mr, Vessey; and in which William Huntington stands highly reprehended. This letter, having been sent among many who attend on my ministry, has laid me under an obligation of taking public notice of it, and assigning what I think to be sufficient reasons for my conduct with respect to the deceased—The charges brought against me are the following:

"We now think it our indispensable duty to prove that Mr. Huntington's conduct, so as it respects Mr. Vessey, is truly: reprehensible. Dear sir, I shall refer you to the written word: Judge not, except it be righteous judgment. He never has yet judged righteously concerning him; he has been guided by, or has believed, the evidence of man, without examining of what spirit he was, instead of adhering to the written word: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. I John iv. 1. And in giving judgment, He that trusts in his own heart is a fool. Mr. Huntington hath erred in judgment, he hath never taken counsel of the Wonderful Counsellor, who teacheth to profit. The Word saith, He that offendeth one of these little ones offendeth me. If we know any thing of divine matters, he hath never had access at a throne of grace concerning the subject; yet, on the other hand, blessed be God, it has been a means of sending our dear brother Vessey many times to a throne of grace, where he has left his burdens; so, if he was cast down, it was for our sakes.

"In the first place, the Word saith, Trust not a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide. Micah vii. 5. Mr. Reed, when he joined Mr. Huntington's connection, cast off all correspondence with our departed friend, agreeably to his pastor's advice, and contrary to his experience. Time would fail to quote the various texts that would condemn their conduct. Dear sir, our aim in this epistle is to condemn their conduct, not to reprobate them as unbelievers, so far as it respects our departed friend. Our reason for this freedom with your address, was from the apprehension we had of Mr. Reed's misconstruing what is here wrote, through the darkness of his mind. If Mr. Huntington and Mr. Reed both see this epistle, we can testify that these are the true sayings of God. We conclude with our affection and love to you, and to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and are,

Dear sir,

Your brethren in Christ,

The Church in Best-street, Chatham.

W. John's

James Brooks.

Thomas Phillips

George Davis, senior.

George Davis, junior."

These are the charges which are brought against Mr. Huntington: to all which I shall reply, and appeal to Mr. Johns for his approbation.

But I shall first give a narrative of my knowledge of Mr. Vessey, and then assign the reasons for my conduct with him, which is so reprehensible.

And to begin—it is now about eleven or twelve years since I first went to preach at Sunbury, in Middlesex, where Mr. Vessey first came to hear me; who then worked as a carpenter at Lord Milsington's. After seeing his face a few times under my ministry, he came and caught me by the hand, and appeared filled with glee and raptures; and indeed I never once saw him in any other frame all the years that I knew him; which has not been the path in which the Almighty has thought proper to lead me; nor do I desire it, for they that are not in the path of tribulation are out of the way, and they that have no changes fear not God.

During his attendance on my ministry in that place, he frequently came after service and spoke to me in the same light, trifling way, but not with the least appearance of seriousness; besides, in those days he had always a young woman by his side, a person without any appearance of religion, with whom, as I was informed, he always went home in the night; which is not one of the things that accompany salvation, or that always attend a penitent sinner at his first setting out in the ways of God.

After he had attended me for some considerable time at Sunbury, he came to hear me at Ditton and Richmond, and several times he took an opportunity of walking with me; at which times he asked me many questions about the sense of Scriptures, but never appeared to me to have the least sight or sense of sin, nor the least appearance of grace; nor did I then speak to him as to a child of God, but simply answered his questions, viewing him no more than a seeker. During this time he got acquainted with a Mr. Butler and a Mr. Stephens,

and another young man, all of whom attended me at times both at Ditton and Richmond.

This Mr. Butler had been in a profession (such a one as it was) before ever I knew any thing of the Lord, and before I knew him. This man was the most puzzling character in his profession that ever staggered or confounded me. His gifts and knowledge of the letter of Scripture were such as I had never seen before. He would reprove and rebuke every ungodly wretch in the town, when I have been as a dumb man, in whose mouth are no reproofs; he would carry my field-pulpit after me, and set it up before a multitude of the most daring scoffers and persecutors, and at the same time, to all appearance, with the very joys of heaven in his face, while I have followed after him trembling like a criminal in chains. He would run over the Scriptures by the hour, when I have not had a word of truth in all my thoughts. He was very conscientious, and esteemed for his honesty wherever he worked; and, when his day's work was done, he would sit down and read and study the Scriptures, chiefly the historical part. His garden lay up to the shoulders in weeds, seldom or never dug or planted; he would not spend any of his leisure time but in the Word of God; and, if at any time he saw me in an evening planting my garden, he would give me a gentle reproof for it, though he frequently sent to beg the produce of my garden. He would not so much as attend his master's payable at the week's end, because it was at a public house, but sent his daughter to receive his hire; nor would he take the trouble of keeping his money, but gave it all up to his wife, who frequently managed so badly as often to get in debt; which debts the creditors generally threw in my teeth, as I stood in the front of the battle; and which, either by begging or out of my own pocket, I generally discharged. He that takes not care of his own house has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Before this man I appeared for many years a poor dejected drone, or a mere idiot, burdened with a daily

cross, and the hourly buffetings of Satan, while this wonderful man appeared as if he was in the third heaven.

His highest comforts always succeeded some new discovery in the Scriptures, or the application (as he called it) of some particular text or promise, none of which was ever fulfilled; and when he could find nothing new in the Bible, he was as a dead man, and, at times, impiously rebellious, even against God himself, for not indulging or gratifying his humour.

This man has at times so beat me about the head. When I came down from the pulpit, in finding fault with my discourses, that I have sometimes said to the Almighty, Lord, if thou dost not pull this man down, where will he fly to?

Whatever I attributed to the Spirit of God in my sermons respecting a work of grace on the heart, he always attributed to the Word of God, which he said worked in every thing; and if I ever, in the course of my sermons, happened to mention the ever-blessed Trinity, he generally gave me a frown from his seat, and a stroke when I had done, telling me he wished that I would let that alone; and, if I answered with any text from John or Paul, he replied, The veil was in part over them all, but in time God would take even that away: intimating that future ages would see wherein the inspired writers had erred. These things staggered and perplexed me much, though I had but little time for dispute, for I was labouring hard in soul for three full years in making my call clear to the ministry; for, although I saw evidently that God attended his work with power every Lord's day, and had at that time given, me many seals to my ministry, yet I was generally laid in chains, and put into Satan's sieve, the greatest part of the following week, begging God to pardon my presumption in attempting to run before I was sent. And the minister who is a stranger to this call is not sent of God, let him be who he may.

The tenets of this man were, that there is but one person in the Godhead, which person he said is Christ; the other two persons are only names, or office-characters, concerning which, he said, the inspired men had not been clear; and whatever the Scriptures attributed to the Spirit, as before observed, he always attributed to the word of Scripture.

To the best of my knowledge, this man stood thus in his flaming profession near or quite ten years.

And as to Mr. Vessey, he was no more, when compared to this man for gifts, abilities, Scripture-light, knowledge, argument, fluency, zeal, or circumspection in life, than I am to an angel. And, as for joys (such as they were), let Mr. Vessey be as joyful at his end as he might, this man exceeded him; and, indeed he exceeded all that ever I saw. I have seen him on a sick-bed, and near death, and his joys were still the same; insomuch that I do believe, if he had died at that time, the whole neighbourhood would have been alarmed at his triumphant departure, and William Huntington would have been one of the first fools that would have proclaimed it, and would have sent him to heaven in a funeral sermon, as many are who never went there in a fiery chariot; and no wonder; for, as hypocrites have not The rod of God upon them (Job xxi. 9) in life, so it is often seen, that They have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm, Psalm lxxiii. 4. In short, I can now see that all that Paul declares concerning the most accomplished hypocrite, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, did conspicuously appear in that man.

Soon after my departure from Dillon to London, Mr. Butler began industriously to preach publicly, and circulate privately, his tenets wherever he had an opportunity. A lady, now sitting with me, is one upon whose judgment he laboured hard to fix his damnable heresy, when at Sunbury in Middlesex; who informed me by letter of his proceedings, which cost me many

tears several weeks together. I found that he had drawn several persons into the same snare with himself; and therefore, one Lord's-day, at Richmond, I preached on the subject of the glorious Trinity; and, after I had done, desired them to meet me in the vestry. Captain Duckett, Mr. Hunter, of the King's Observatory, and my dear friend Mr. Chapman, of Petersham, all of whom are now living and well known, were present. I asked them if they could put any construction upon the personal pronouns I, He, and They, which did not express persons? and whether they could be applied, without the greatest confusion, to names, offices, or characters? Moreover I asked them, if when Christ said, I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me (John viii, 18), it does not clearly point out two distinct witnesses? And it is as clear that the Holy Ghost is another distinct witness, Whom God hath given, to them that obey him (Acts v. 32), And He that believeth hath this witness in himself. And these are the three persons that bear record in heaven: by the river Jordan God bore witness in speaking from heaven; Christ, the faithful and true Witness, was heard speaking on earth; and the Holy Ghost seen in a bodily shape, like a dove. Again, Christ says, And I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter. John xiv. 6. Here is Christ, the consolation of Israel, praying; the Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort, prayed to; and another Comforter is promised.

And it is clear that God is called a person, of whom Christ is the express image, Being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. And as God the Father is a person, so also is Christ; and so Paul calls him, And, if I forgive any thing, for your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 10. And such Pilate understood Christ to be, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. Matt. xxvii. 24. And, if the Holy Ghost is nothing but a name, the blasphemer of him would not be threatened with eternal damnation. But

the Holy Ghost is another distinct person; he that denies this, denies the testimony of the living God, the temple of the Holy Ghost, and HE that dwelleth therein. However, we have fellow-ship with the Father, which no Sabellian ever had; and fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, which no liar can have; and we feel and enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit.

The testimony of heaven comes from The Father to the Son, and from the Son to the Spirit, who is the speaker to all the churches, Rev. i. There is he who sits upon the throne, the Lamb in the midst of it, and the seven spirits before it; or the Holy Ghost, who is perfect God, with his sevenfold gifts; who shall abide with the saints for ever; who shall lead them into all truth. And again, when the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them; does it not imply that the Holy Ghost is a person? Dr. Priestley himself is so sensible of this, that, in his Funeral Sermon published on the death of Mr. Robinson, formerly of Cambridge, in applying the words to Mr. Robinson, he has put them thus, Over which he was made an overseer; instead of Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. I asked them,—If, when Christ calls his Father another Witness, and the Holy Ghost another Comforter, whether it did not imply three distinct persons? And if you say, No—it implies names, offices, and Characters; then I ask, What use is a name, when there is no person of that name? And what use is an office, if there be no person to execute that office? or a character, if no person to fill that character? What can a name, an office, or a character, which are but non-entities (without a person), do for us? Can a name or office, without a person or being, comfort, support, and instruct us; qualify men for the ministry, appoint them to it, support them in it, dispossess devils, and convert souls by it? I asked further, If I had a thousand pounds to leave a child of mine by will; and I leave it worded thus: I, William Huntington, leave, give, and bequeath, so and so, to so and so, &c., this is my will; and an attorney insists upon it

that there never was any such person as William Huntington, but the name and personal pronoun is no more than an office or a character; and by the same rule make my child to be nothing but a name or an office also—How is that child to fare? and who is to have the money? Can a name execute an office, or fill a character? If such constructions as these are to be put upon words, nouns, and pronouns, it would be easy to strip every man in this world of all that was ever left him by will, or secured to him by deed. And is not this charging Him who made man's mouth, and who creates the fruit of the lip, with ignorance, and with speaking nonsense? And sure I am, that, if I had been permitted to put such constructions upon Dr. Priestley's bills of indictment which were found against the rioters at Birmingham as he has put upon the Scriptures of truth, he would-never have recovered one farthing damages.

Paul never deserted his colours, even when he fought with beasts, because Paul's Christ was God, and always stood by him; but the Doctor has denied this Lord of hosts, and He has denied the Doctor, or else he would never have fled from Birmingham, nor have left his flock it is the hireling that fleeth. Nor would the Doctor have gone to law before the unbelievers to recover his loss, if he had ever seen, known, felt, or enjoyed, Paul's Christ; but have said as Paul did, I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. So much for the Doctor.

I asked Mr. Butler farther, If he did not, in reading the Scriptures, often find his mind and thoughts run against many-Scriptures of: truth which stumbled and staggered him, which he was obliged to wrest, misconstrue, or pass over, and catch at those which were expressive of the unity of the Godhead? and whether he could peruse the Word, or meditate therein, without stumbling at the Word? and whether he found the highway cast up, and the stumbling-blocks so taken out of the way, as for all the Scriptures to harmonise so as for no text to

run counter to his sentiments; but that his thoughts were all established, his judgment informed, his mind stayed and kept in peace; his views and ideas in harmony with the Scriptures, and straight paths made to his feet.

To all which Mr. Butler confessed that he could not find things so to his mind, but the reverse; though he tried to defend himself but he was confounded, his countenance fell, and he appeared covered with shame and confusion. All this can be witnessed by six sons now living.

About this time I sent Mr. Butler a letter, and I never repented but once for not keeping a copy of it; I have also asked him for a sight of it more than once, but never could obtain it; however, it was written under so much grief and soul-concern, and attended with such energy, that I believe he will never forget it in this world, nor in the next: in which I appealed to his conscience, whether God had not blessed the doctrine that I preached to the conversion of many souls, which he was now labouring to seduce; and whether any blessing, or any converting work, or even reformation, had ever attended any of his reproofs, rebukes, sermons, or instructions, that ever he delivered in all the nine or ten years that he had been labouring and toiling at it? I asked him, moreover, whether it was likely that a man, so infallible in his principles as he thought himself to be, would meet with no success or blessing from God in his labours, while the power of God so visibly attended my labours in the word and doctrine, which, according to his judgment, could be nothing but falsehood? or if the thought that glory could redound to God by my lies? To all which he made no reply. But soon after this he had a dream, or a vision, of the Trinity, as he acknowledged to me; and down went his sandy foundation, false hopes, false doctrines, and refuges of lies, altogether; and he soon found himself in black despair, without God, and without hope in the world: he began to tear his hair from his head, and, in little

better than distraction, came up to London to me. God, at the same time, gave me many inward checks and cautions to have no more to do with him; but universal charity construed that as a suggestion from another quarter. I therefore took him into my house, and kept him in frosty weather for ten weeks; and, as he was much in debt, I gave him a few guineas to pay some of his debts off: and soon after I gave him sixteen guineas more, to pay off the rest. I made him one of my pew-openers, and got his family to town; gave his wife and himself ten guineas a year to clean the chapel; and, with the materials left of the chapel when it was built, I built him a little cottage, which cost me ten pounds more.—Thus much for universal charity. He being a bricklayer by trade, and a good workman at fixing coppers, grates, &c., I got him work; but so strangely did he behave, that, if any gentleman was pleased with his work, and offered him five or six shillings for his job, his conscience would not let him take it, he would return half of it back to them again; and, when he wanted money, he would come and beg a guinea of me, when I had been obliged to borrow all that I have given him before.

When he was at my house, he used to get up in the night, and pray so loud that you might have heard him out in the street; and when at dinner, if I filled his plate, he would eat a mouthful or two, and then, with an air of disdain, push the plate back to me, and throw back his head, and look with all the envy of a Turk. When he was at the chapel, as soon as I had entered the place, I used to hear him praying so loud that you might hear him all over the place; and when I entered the vestry, he would come after me bellowing like a bull for me to pray for him; and at the same time I used to go crying to God till I was quite wore out with this abominable hypocrite.

His daily practice was telling every body that came in his way what a profession he had made, and what a perilous state he was in; by which he staggered and threw down many that

were weak in faith, hardened many hypocrites, and opened the mouths of many of the ungodly to reproach the good ways of God: he tried to make every body as miserable as himself; and no wonder; for, if a devil gets any ease, it is when he can get such as Job to bear a part of his horrors, Soon after this he took it in his head to cast off all labour, and that he would work for his bread no more, from which time we separated him from us, nor have I ever been pestered with him since. After which he mumped about wherever he could, gets in people's debts, and lives chiefly on those who he knows are enemies to me. When the branch is withered, the men of the world gather them into their company, as these did him; and they assist him as a man that has been greatly injured by Mr. Huntington, who forsook him in his trouble; but I forsook him in his laziness, for they that will not work neither shall they eat. Seven years was I puzzled to make out this wonderful man; all which time, like Manoah and his wife, I could only wonder and look on; and three years after this I was pestered with this devil; his smiting me so frequently brought a carnal fear of him upon my mind, insomuch that I often eyed him when in my pulpit, to see whether the cloud was upon his face, or the sunshine: if the former, I knew I should be smitten; if the latter, I knew I should escape with whole bones. In short, as Paul says, he seemed to me to have all knowledge, and he understood many mysteries, and pretended to such assurance of faith as would have moved mountains; he tasted the good Word of God, partook of the Holy Ghost, as Saul did; had a large share of Spiritual gifts, and many tastes of the power of the world to come; and yet is fallen away; and so fallen as that he is not as yet renewed to repentance, nor is there the least sign of it; nor do I believe it is possible he ever should, seeing he has cursed the everlasting Gospel.

I believe this man was raised up to teach me many wholesome lessons, and his full established my judgment in many things. I never saw a professor that answered Paul's

description in the Epistle to the Hebrews, till this man was discovered. In him I saw that kind of knowledge that puffeth up, and the full assurance of Solomon's fool, who rages and is confident. In him I saw the one talent, and the use made of it, and which talent appeared to be taken from him and given to me; for, when my gift began to appear public use, he seemed to be a mere idiot, a novice in the worst sense, and a mass of confusion. In him I saw the man that took the highest seat at the marriage feast, and I saw him with shame take the lowest room. In him I saw the first and now the last, while the last is now first. In him I saw one promising liberty to others, while himself was the servant of corruption, never being purged from it: his house was deserted by the unclean spirit, emptied, swept, and garnished, and now repossessed stronger than ever. In him I saw the holy commandment which has been delivered to many, and which has since been cursed by him and left. In him I saw wretched rebellion, presumption, a sinning wilfully, and a falling away; and, after three years labour in praying for him and sympathising with him, I found, and sensibly felt, the impossibility of renewing such a one again to repentance: which God had impressed my mind with soon after he fell, if I had understood it; but God speaks once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not.

The things in which this man's fall established me are these:

First. That those who run unsent of God, let their gifts, abilities, life, and walk, be whatever they may, shall never profit God's people at all. They may convert men to themselves, but they never shall convert a soul to God; being impossible that such should communicate the Spirit, grace, strength, or divine comfort, from the enjoyment of pardoning love, so as to say, with Paul, I thank my God that you are all partakers of my grace; they being sensual men, and destitute of all these things. Nor was this man of the least use, in this sense, to any soul living, either professor or profane; he

stumbled many, but seasoned none, for there was no salt in him.

Second. I was established in this truth—that, whatever speculative knowledge a man may have, if he have not an unctuous experience of the power of God on the heart, his knowledge and gifts will only puff him with pride, till he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Third. That a seducer of the saints is the blackest character in this world, and the deepest sufferer in the next. Butler told me, with the sighs and groans of the damned, that he knew that the heresy he had propagated was not given up by many that had embraced it. The blood of the slain will be required at the watchman's hand.

Fourth. That there is no such way to heaven as those professors have cast up who are destitute of a spiritual birth, which is termed, a being drawn by love, and having "the heart opened like the heart of Lydia." Mr. Butler was in this path; and, when he heard me enforcing a sense of sin, and a spirit wounded under it, he said, "He is got upon his own dunghill again; he thinks to bring them all his own way, but he never will." However, I know that my way is the path of the just; and they that die out of it will be damned, die when they may; for none but the sick need the physician, none are called to repentance but sinners, none are sons but them that are chastened, and those that never were lost never were saved.

Fifth: That to stumble and take offence at an essential truth is a certain prelude to a fearful fall, He stumbled and took offence at the doctrine of the Trinity, and at them that preached it; he was too wise in his own conceit to submit to divine revelation, and to a humble acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, Col. ii. 2. And so it shall be; for many shall stumble, and fall, and be

snared, and be broken, and be taken. To be wise above what is written, is to exceed the pride of a devil: and for a poor crawling worm, destitute of grace, to attempt to correct the revelation that the incomprehensible Jehovah hath given of himself, by correcting and contradicting God, turning persons into non-entities, beings into empty names, and personal pronouns into office-characters; surely he must needs be wise that thus teaches God knowledge.

I knew a young man about the time of Mr. Butler's fall, or soon after, who belonged to us, and seemed a simple young man, but by some means stumbled into Mr. Butler's heresy; he then sent me a very long insolent letter of there being but one person in the Godhead, and quoted a number of passages from the Scriptures expressive of the unity of God, but left out all those that mention a plurality persons; and in this letter he returned his ticket, or token of admission among us, which was to let me know that he had done with me, and with all such blind guides as he took me to be: and, indeed, his letter was pregnant with such ignorance and presumption as made me shudder. I sent him word that he was a Sabellian, and that his persuasion came not from him that called him, nor did he ever get it from God in answer to prayer: and so he soon found it, for he shortly fell into great distress and horror of soul. A person ran away likewise in his debt and brought him to beggary, and soon after he was struck blind; but, after many long struggles and deep sufferings, he recovered with the loss of one of his eyes. And for some years past this gentleman, as well as Mr. Butler, has had work enough to buoy themselves up in the deep waters, without trifling with a consuming fire. However, I have some hope of the latter, but none of the former.

Mr. Butler got his notion from these words in Mr. Hart's Hymns, as he has informed me:

For all true Israelites adore

One God, Immanuel, and no more.

The observations that I made on his profession, after his fall, are the following:

He never appeared to be, as all God's elect are, crying day and night to God: if ever he was bowed down, it was when he was in debt and dunned for money, or else when he could not find any fresh discovery in the Bible. They that have no changes fear not God.

He had no daily cross upon his back, nor the least appearance of a humble mind; no broken heart; no godly sorrow that worketh repentance, nor of that repentance that needed not to be repented of; without which there is no Christ in the heart, nor salvation applied; and without which, the higher the hypocrite flies the deeper he falls.

His prayers were singular, expressive of dictating to God; and often he was speaking to the people instead of God: they were always dry, barren, and empty, savouring of horrors, put up with trembling and in bondage; or else they savoured of unbecoming boldness and presumption: they were expressive of the greatest distance, destitute of all freedom, familiarity, nearness, access, union, communion, fellowship, or friendship; consequently there was no unction, favour, power, or feeling, in them.

He could chatter away about the Scriptures for hours together, just like Solomon's prating fool, or like Paul's instrument without life, giving sound; such viols being always in tune, and the bass-string sure to be nothing but self.

After this long digression I must return to Mr. Vessey, who soon after he had heard me, got intimately acquainted with

Mr. Butler, and became one of his pupils; for he had so industriously circulated his heresy that several persons were leavened by it—Mr. Ridly for one, Mr. Stephens, and another young man, who is since become an awful apostate. Mr. Ridly, who was called under my ministry, was reclaimed, and is now with us; Mr. Stephens, of Moulsey, in Surrey, is, I have some reason to believe, still in the delusion, for Mr. Vessey desired that he might preach his funeral sermon, and on the last Lord's-day he went down to perform it. He has been preaching for some years, but never did any good, nor do I believe he ever will. Soon after Mr. Vessey had been a little qualified at the foot of Mr. Butler, he came to London, and joined a society that kept up a prayer-meeting, where they prayed and expounded the Scriptures. Mr. Vessey appeared among the speakers; and one night, in the hearing of my dear friend Mrs. Baker, he desired the people to stop; he wished to mention something of his state of mind to them, and began to inform them that he had some uneasiness, because he never had felt any of that inward, distress that God's people speak of; intimating that he was a stranger to the plague of his own heart, to conviction by the Spirit, and to that soul-travail that attends all, more or less, who are born again of God: but the people got up and went out, not staying to hear it. About this time he did several jobs for my dear friend Mr. Baker; but always appeared in a light, vain, trifling spirit, and not with the least appearance of the grace of God. Soon after this he removed to Woolwich, where, in process of time, I heard that he had commenced preacher; at which I never was more surprised, for I should as soon have thought that my little girl was turned preacher. In process of time Mr. Barrett and Mr. Olliff, who often preach for me, brought tidings of his wonderful gifts, knowledge, zeal, boldness, and success in making converts, and of his preaching out of doors and in doors. These tidings reaching my ears perpetually; and, through much entreaty, I was prevailed on to go down and open his new place, not knowing what God might have done

for him; but soon after I heard that he preached up That nothing was faith but full assurance, at which time I wrote my Cry of Little Faith. Some time after this I was prevailed on to let him preach at Providence Chapel: and once I heard him; and, hearing some things that I did not approve of, I never let him come there again. A few friends informed me also, that he had privately circulated it about, that I greatly erred in the doctrine of the Trinity, which confirmed me that he was deeply rooted in Mr. Butler's heresy; and Mr. Barret and Mr. Olliff told me that they began to discover him. Soon after which a letter was sent among some people in connection with me, which after some time fell into my hands. It was a vindication of himself from the charge of Arianism, which he might easily do, for he was a Sabellian. I sent him a line to inform him that his letter was not sound, and that I would print a dissection of it. He sent me a note, desiring me not to do it, for in a few days he should be in town, and he would call on me, which he never did.

At length a gentleman, a Mr. Davis, of Chatham, whom I had known for some years, called on me, and informed me of Mr. Vessey's success at Chatham, of his soundness in the faith, of his usefulness, and of his being instrumental in calling his own son. Knowing this gentleman, and that he had stood many years in a profession, and viewing him a man capable of judging, I was persuaded that the various reports raised were false, and I was willing to hope the best: he told me, moreover, that they were going to build him, a place, and he wished me much to come down to Chatham. I told the gentleman of the various reports I had heard; he affirmed that they were all false. I then asked how he came to write to my people and not to me? &c. Mr. Davis strongly defended and vindicated him, and told me that he should come to me. To which I replied, that, if the reports be false, he is an injured man; and, if so, and he goes on and prospers, I will come down to Chatham, and will assist him in any thing I can.

Some time after this a letter came. At the time of its coming I was not at home. My wife, having received it, laid it up for me, and forgetting to give it me, I knew nothing of the appointment; and so he came, in company with Mr. Davis, while I was gone to High Wycomb, where I had been previously engaged for a fortnight before, so that I saw him not. At my return my wife informed me who had been to see me, and gave me the letter he had sent. His coming I thought looked well; but I was soon informed, by Olliff and Barret, that all that I had formerly thought of the man, and his doctrines was true; and others informed that some persons who know me (but are no friends of mine) were secretly rejoicing; saying, that Mr. Vessey would shortly take up his pen against me, and that I should have work enough to maintain my standing with such an antagonist. These various reports drove me to desire of his congregation, at Woolwich, an honest and punctual account of the doctrines that he preached, of the spirit that he discovered, of the effects of it upon them, and of the life that he lived; and such an account as they would give me leave to publish, with their names affixed to it. This request of mine was made in the month of May last; and in the month of June I received the following letter, signed by eleven persons; and, although there were several of his friends at the church-meeting who refused to sign it when it was read before them, yet every one of them acknowledged that the account was true.

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON

Woolwich, June 14, 1792.

Dear Sir,

We, the undermentioned members of the church at Woolwich, who, through mercy, have experienced the goodness of our God and Saviour, in rending, by the effectual working of the spirit, that veil of error from our understanding which Satan

and our deceitful hearts had drawn us under, through the instrumentality of our late pastor, Mr. Vessey, having heard that he hath, by various means, both in word and letter, endeavoured to extricate himself from under the charges brought against him by us, respecting the errors he advanced while at Woolwich, have judged it necessary to send you an account of his sentiments, which he publicly and privately taught amongst us, with the arguments he made use of to establish them; which, if you think proper, you are at liberty to publish, with our names unto it. Seeing that many are staggered, and others blinded, through the feigned words he is spreading abroad as a cloak to cover over the hypocrisy he is actuated with, lest the errors he taught amongst us should be made manifest.

"About two year, ago or upwards, before he withdrew himself from officiating amongst us, several circumstances took place, which were, in some measure, made a means of opening our eyes to a discovery of the hypocrisy of his conduct. The first of which arose from some charges brought against his wife respecting her outward walk; which, after examination into, and being satisfied therein, it was brought before the church, and stated unto them, the majority of which agreed with him to her being suspended, which was accordingly done; but, notwithstanding his thus agreeing to it, he told us before we parted, that he was firmly persuaded that she was innocent of that which was alleged against her. Some time after this one of the church raised a contention respecting the decrees of God; on which account a church-meeting was called. During the interval the man had a private conference with Mr. Vessey; the substance of which was, Whether God ordained every event that takes place in time, which arises through the entrance of sin into the world? Or whether he only foreknew that such events would happen, and therefore permitted them? Which last was the man's opinion. On the next evening, after preaching, having entered into conversation with Mr.

Vessey respecting that which had passed between him and the man the night before, we found, to our astonishment, and contrary to that which he had oftentimes preached, that he justified the man in what he had asserted, and declared that such were his sentiments; upon which one of the members, Mr. Short, asked him, Whether or not the means that were instrumental in the death of Christ were not absolutely determined as well as foreknown by God the same as the death itself? To which, after some hesitation, he said, No: he believed they were only foreknown, and therefore permitted. To which reply it was answered, Then, if that be the case, the using, or not using, of these means must wholly depend upon the free-will of man, and, therefore, might be fulfilled, or not fulfilled; which was no better than Arminianism to suppose. On Monday evening following we met together, with the rest of the church, to come to some settlement respecting the matter in hand. After prayer unto the Lord for direction therein, we called upon the man to give us an account of the error he believed we were in; the substance of which was this:—That to affirm every event was ordained of God, was a damnable error, and came from hell; for it made God the author of sin; and that those who held such doctrines could have no sorrow on the account of evil; for that, he said, would be rebelling against God, and contrary to that which we believed, To which Mr. Vessey assented, and somewhat angrily said, at the conclusion of our meeting, that, if we opposed him thus in the aforesaid matter, a little thing would drive him away. The new evening following he took these words for his text, "And of some have compassion, making a difference," Jude. Which discourse he levelled at those of us who had opposed him the night before; wherein he endeavoured, though attended with a good deal of evident confusion, which we perceived him in, to separate the secret will of God into two distinct parts. The one he called his permissive will; which, he said, had to do with those events which he foreknew would terminate evil. The other he called his decretive will; which, he said, had to do

with those events that were brought about through the immediate operation of his Spirit. The substance of the argument he drew up to support his idea of a permissive will in God, founded upon his fore knowledge only, without any effectual determination, was, that many words were made use of which were agreeable to the Scriptures, though they were not expressed together therein. Thus God is declared to be a sovereign, and grace is said to be of him; and therefore we call it sovereign grace. From which argument, with several others of the like kind, from the fitness of words, he endeavoured to draw a line for the foundation of a permissive will. On the Sabbath-day following he preached wholly against what he had asserted on the Tuesday evening, declaring that every event was fore ordained of God, and that it necessarily came to pass as it was thus ordained; which, when he was told of it, he declared that he had been established in the above doctrine some years.

"Query—Whether Mr. Vessey's judgment was not affected at times by the liquor he drank in the course of preaching through the day, which was half a pint of rum in water: this was his constant allowance every Sabbath he preached, besides that which we used to give him to drink at his meals.

"Some time after this a person from Lewisham proposed himself to us for a member; and, after asking him some questions relative to his experience, we appointed a day for him to meet the church. In the interim between that and his coming, one of the members providentially heard that he lived in fornication, which we made known to our pastor; who, with an air of indifference, said that we should never go on, nor have any to join us in church-fellowship, while we gave heed to all the reports that went abroad; and made answer, that marriage was no more than a mere ceremony. But this not satisfying us, upon his coming we charged it home to him; which he, with some kind of confusion, denied. We then asked

him where it was that he was married? he said, at London. Upon which, after having told him the necessity of having such a report cleared up before we could receive him, we ask him to give us a direction where it was performed; to which, after some hesitation, he said that he thought it would be best to decline coming, seeing such a report had got abroad, and after that time came no more; which was a sufficient evidence to us that he was guilty, though Mr. Vessey would have received him in without any examination into it, seeing no harm in it, provided they abided to their agreement; for he told one of our members, Mr. Rogers, a few days after, who had some conversation with him on the subject, that he himself would not have submitted to the ordinance, had it not been to stop the mouths of the world.

"This, sir, is some account of a man who denies the name of an Antinomian.

"When he first came to Woolwich his sentiments were, that there was no true faith short of assurance; which doctrine was received by some few that became acquainted with him before he began publicly to speak at Woolwich. After he began preaching he openly denied ever teaching that doctrine; and from that went into this—that it was impossible for a soul ever to doubt of his interest in Christ after he had once experienced the efficacious virtue of his blood and righteousness; and positively asserted that, where this was not the case, (that is, a confidence enjoyed within free from all doubting, as to spiritual things, at all times) that soul had no assurance: through which some of us were kept in bondage and suspense, not finding this criterion and our experience to agree together; others of us were driven on to a presumptuous faith through our own feelings; for he used to deny that these misgivings of heart, which arose through the power of unbelief and other in-bred corruptions, were doubts, except they proceeded from the lips, but only temptations to

doubt. The passages he used to quote as a proof against the possibility of doubting after actual justification had taken place in the soul, were these, Isaiah xxxii. 7; 2 Cor. ii., and Eph. v. 6.

"When speaking on the nature of regeneration, he used to assert that an elect vessel, after his spiritual birth, had two hearts, an old one and a new one, which consisted of two consciences, wills, understandings, and affections, both of which were complete. For a proof of the first (that is, the old one) he brought Rom. viii. 7, which he applied to a believer; and what the Apostle terms the flesh! in the seventh chapter of the same epistle, he said was the old heart, or the old conscience, will, understanding, and affections, which did nothing but sin. The other (that is, the new heart) was perfectly holy, even as God is holy, and wanted no renewing; which, he said, to affirm was Arminianism; and he argued thus:—If any new heart is perfectly holy, (to prove which he brought the first Epistle of John iii. 9) then what holiness can be added unto it? and if it is not perfectly holy, and wants renewing, then tell me how much I am to be renewed?

"Thirdly, That the habit, or principle of grace, is not implanted in the heart when we are created anew in Christ Jesus; and that the faculty of the will, after being renewed, is not invariably to good from a principle of life within, but only as it is actuated by a power from without.

"Forthy, That sanctification is imputed the same as justification, or that Christ is our sanctification the same as he is our righteousness; that is, by the imputation of his merits unto us, which constitutes us all glorious within.

"Fifth, That there is no need of exhortations where the love of God is once shed abroad in the heart. And such language as his#151;What manner of men ought ye to be? he used to call legal; saying, Do not tell me about ought to be; if God's Spirit is within, you want none of those exhortations. Through which,

some were led to slight the exhortations of the word of the Gospel to diligence and watchfulness, under a feigned presence of waiting till the Spirit operated, which, he said, would spring up spontaneously. In respect of obedience to our superiors, that he used to call the fear of man. Praying for our children, and in our families, before them that were carnal, was of no use; for how did we know but they were probates? Self-examination he called legal; asserting that, where a soul had attained to a knowledge of his election, it was impossible for him to fall into error. As to his old heart, his expression was, when any were complaining of what they laboured under; that he let it work as it would, for what could he do with it? As to any acknowledgment or thanks to the instruments God in his providence raised up to supply his temporal needs, that he was ever above; as resting that it was enough to return it unto God. Most of these things in this fifth charge he was measurable in, sometimes establishing them, then confusing them, and then establishing them again.

"Sixth, That, when the Lord Jesus Christ gave up the kingdom unto the Father, then the Godhead would be separated from the manhood and he would be divested of all power and authority; and so be subject unto God, the same as one of us, excepting being the Elder Brother of the family. This he used to insist upon whenever treating upon that subject; and positively declared, that it was because of our shallow conceptions that we could not receive it. When he was told that this idea led to Arianism, he replied, indifferently; Well! whether this be the case or not (that is, of the Godhead being, separated from the manhood), we shall be with him, and see him as he is.

"Seventh, That the idea of three distinct persons in the Godhead was not Scriptural; for, though there were three that bare record in heaven, yet they were only there distinguished to set forth the work and operation of God, and therefore were

no more than three personal characters, names, and office-titles, subsisting in the Godhead; and to describe them any other way, was to lead men's minds astray in their addresses to God, by setting before them three Beings or Essences, which was Tritheism. This was what he taught as a doctrinal explanation of the Trinity, which we have witness to prove from some who have no connection with us, but received it from sitting under his ministry. And once in particular, after preaching, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Short went into his house with him, where he took down from off his shelf a book, entitled *The Faith and Hope of the Gospel*, and read the following extract verbatim:—

"A person hath been defined by some, a thing subsisting by itself, which is not part of another; and by others, the individual substance of a rational nature. And do not the words, Three Persons, naturally convey the ideas of three separate individuals? Are not many hereby led into wrong conceptions about God, as if the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, were and existed separately as three individual human persons? And is not this Tritheism? Do not the generality speak of the Father as if he existed separately and independently of, and was somehow greatly superior to, the Word and the Holy Ghost? And both not this indicate as if they thought the Father to be the Great God, and the Word and the Holy Ghost to be two Demigods? How contrary is this to the solemn declaration of the most High, Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our Aim, is one Jehovah! Is not such confusion the consequence of calling the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons? But there are other men who are clear of such confused ideas about the Godhead; and though, in compliance to custom, they use the words Three Persons [which, by the way, Mr. Vessey never did while with us, unless it was to condemn it], yet they intend no more thereby than the distinction and the offices in the Godhead.a

"These Mr. Vessey declared to us were his sentiments, and the first author he ever read who treated so clearly of it.

"Also, why did he tell the clerk, Richard Pankhurst, to leave the words Three Persons out in singing the hymns? And why did he, after he had written a letter on the Trinity by the desire of Mr. Olliff and Mr. Main (which, we believe, was to stop the inquiry into that which he had before held, that he might not be discovered), change his former sentiments of three personal characters, names, and office, titles, into persons and subsistences, and tell Mr. Short, who went to him on hearing the report, that he did not altogether like the words persons and subsistences, that he had there asserted? Why did he say that Mr. Huntington and the minister of Blackfriars were not clear in the respect to the Trinity; and that Mr. R.—e had given ,the late Mr. Elliot, the Arian, sufficient ground to charge him with Tritheism? These are stubborn facts, which he cannot deny any other way but by presumptuously calling the Holy Ghost to witness that they are false, as he hath done in his letter to you respecting Arianism; which is not to be wondered at, when he could, while with us, with levity dare God to his face to damn him; making use of these words, when speaking of the stability of the covenant—that he cannot do it if he would.

"After Mr. Vessey had for some time gone to Chatham occasionally, the Lord was pleased to open the eyes of one and another of us to some discovery of his doctrine, and the effects it had produced amongst us; which, upon Mr. Smith's coming, was fastened home under the word, with power, on several of our hearts. Upon which, five of us went to Mr. Vessey to have some conversation respecting the state of the church. At which time we asked him, Whether he had any discovery given him of the cause of such a declension amongst us? He said that many things had occurred to his mind; but he did not think it would be profitable to enter into

discourse about it. To which we made answer, That it was for that purpose we came unto him, as we had reason to believe that it was through his doctrine the church was brought into the present situation, which was that of Antinomianism. To which he replied, That he believed great part of the people was in that error; but wholly denied himself to be the instrument of bringing them there; making answer, That what he had preached had never taken that effect with him. A few days after, one of the members positively telling him that he was the means of drawing us aside, he sent us the following letter:—

To the Deacons and other Members of Church of Christ in Caliss's Alley.

"As a period seems to be put to my usefulness among you as a minister, and as you look upon me as the ringleader of your souls in that truly awful error, of sinning that grace may abound; you should have ere now dismissed me as a servant, and have also cut me off from church communion with you as a brother. [You will observe that this was impracticable, as the majority was wholly against us.] But, as this hath not been done, I have deemed it necessary to acquaint you of my fixed intentions on this present occasion. I intend, then, henceforth, to withdraw myself peaceably from you, and totally to desist from any further labouring amongst you in the work of the ministry. How far this conduct is justifiable or condemnable, the Searcher of Hearts will make manifest in some future period.

"Finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

"And now, whatever hard thoughts any of you may harbour in your breasts concerning my everlasting welfare, or otherwise, yet persuaded I am, that I shall sit down in the kingdom of

God with many of you. Therefore give me leave, this once, to subscribe myself your brother in the threefold bend of eternal love,

"WILLIAM VESSEY."

"Thus, sir, we have given you as brief an account as possible of the things that Mr. Vessey endeavours to appear a total stranger to; the effects of which are increasingly making manifest in most part of those who were said to be called under him; the whole of which, excepting two, have separated themselves from us.

"We remain, sir, with due respect, Your well-wishers in the furtherance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,

THOMAS MITCHELL

JOHN ROGERS

SEARL SHORT

DAVID MALLACK

RICHARD PANKHURST

RICHARD WELLBORN WILLIAM WILDISH

JAMES MARDEN

WILLIAM WOART

THOMAS LAMB

JOSEPH FULLER."

After I had received this letter, I was sufficiently confirmed in my judgment respecting the man and his doctrine. It is now

about ten years since Mr. Vessey first imbibed the doctrine of Sabellianism; for, about that time, he joined with Mr. Butler in attempting to make a proselyte of a certain lady, who is at this time in my house; Mr. Stephens consenting to the doctrine, though Vessey and Butler: were the chief speakers. After the reception of this letter from Woolwich, I made diligent inquiry to know if there ever was one soul converted to God by Mr. Vessey's ministry; for it hath long been an established point with me, that no man, let his gifts be what they may, unless he be born again of the Holy Ghost, can be a minister of the Spirit to another. And, upon inquiry, I found that there was not one soul at Woolwich converted to God by him. He converted several to his notions; but they are never the better for that. There is one at Streatham also, that I have known for several years, whom Mr. Vessey called his firstborn son, his might, and the beginning of his strength; but there is nothing in him; he is neither all glorious within, nor all glorious without. That he was called by Mr. Vessey I do not deny; but he was never called of God, nor does he know any thing of him. Nor do I believe that there is one soul that was ever converted to the faith of Christ by Mr. Vessey at Chatham, nor any where else; if there is, let them send me an account of it, and refute me. I have heard lately of two persons at Maidstone, that were his offspring, and began to preach in the High Town, till a mob drove them from their high station; which was nothing else but a being buffeted for their faults.

It was my intention to have published the letter from Woolwich soon after the reception of it; but a deal of labour, and being twice in the country, prevented it. And when I heard of his death I intended it should have been for ever buried in silence, till the letter from Chatham, which had been circulated among my friends, fell into my hands, in which I am so highly reprehended; and, as I am certain the publication of this cannot alter the state of the deceased, but may open the eyes of some who are in his damnable delusion, and undeceive

others who may be led to cleave to his heresy by the report of his end, I think myself justifiable in publishing the same. If he made a joyful and triumphant end, he died as he lived. He was joyful and triumphing all the ten years that I knew him: I never once saw him in any other frame. And, as he himself owned that he never had experienced any change, of heart, it is not likely that any changes should appear in his frames. But to have no changes is not the criterion of a saint, but of a sinner; and to have no bands in death is not called the end of the just, but of the hypocrite; and to escape the path of tribulation is not following them that are in glory, but those that were at ease in Zion. We know that a delusion is strong, and it is a damnable delusion that he was in. And, if the strong man armed keep the palace, his goods are in peace, whether in life or death; unless the eye of justice awaken the conscience. Some are awakened in this world, and others lift up their eyes in the next. I knew Mr. Vessey upwards of ten years: but the real ballast of a vessel of mercy, which is the forgiveness of sins, access to God, union with Christ, a broken heart, and a daily cross, never appeared in him, nor the least symptom of them; and, without which, popular applause and pride are sure to fill the sails, and make shipwreck of the brightest profession, either in this world, or in the next.

I confess that Mr. Butler greatly staggered and perplexed my mind for many months, and sent me with many petitions to God, who one day sent me this promise: 'Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not;' in fulfilling which, he gave me a vision on Ripley Common, in the day-time, which established my soul; for I was not fighting against the glorious doctrine of the Trinity, but the hand of my faith was beaten off and my mind perpetually staggered by this man's damnable sophistry; therefore this vision was sent to settle and establish me. And it was a vision of the Trinity that Butler saw, which drowned him in despair; and no wonder, for he was fighting against it.

Thus God's hand was known toward his servant, and his indignation toward his enemy.

John saw the right-hand of the Father holding forth a book (Rev. v. 1), and, at the same time, saw the Lamb take the book, ver. 6, 7. And he had a vision of the seven spirits which are before his throne (Rev. i. 4); denoting, by the number seven, that the Holy Ghost is perfect God, who communicates to the churches his perfect, or seven-fold gifts, dividing to every man severally as He will, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Vessey's damnable delusion is this:—that there is but one person in the Godhead, which is Christ, who acts in three different characters, So that, when the Prince of Life offered himself in sacrifice, it was not to God the Father as another distinct person, but to himself in another office-character. What wretched confusion does this make where there is the greatest harmony! However, this I know, that those who have got the Anointing in them, who leads them into all truth, know what Paul means by the fellowship of the Spirit; and what John means by our having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus. Such souls have got the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, in their own hearts. The ever-blessed Trinity dwell in such humble and contrite souls, agreeable to the promise.—And Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we (which means no less than a plurality of persons) will come unto him, and make our abode with him, John xiv. 23. But Mr. Vessey knew nothing of these things, he had no experience; he owned his heart was never changed; he was a real Antinomian in spirit, a Sabellian in principle, and a libertine in practice. This is confirmed by the testimony of eleven men; nor did I ever see any thing to contradict it in all the ten years that I knew him, but rather to confirm it. And if such sensual, uninspired men, so involved in damnable

delusions, who can preach against the divine revelation that God has given of himself, and boast of the full assurance of faith, while they deny the personality of God, the Giver of faith, and the personality of Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith, and the personality of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of faith: I say, if such men as these are in the way to heaven, we may say that the Bible has deceived us all. But the Scriptures of truth cannot be broken, as it is written, Let God be true, but every man a liar. Nor do I believe that Mr. Vessey ever had what is called, in the strictest sense, a spiritual gift; for, if the Spirit bestows a gift of knowledge and a gift of utterance on a graceless man, I believe that such a knowledge is tolerably sound in the letter, and the speech is often seen to be such as cannot easily be condemned, Whatever it may degenerate to afterwards, when God puts a bridle in their jaws, causing them to err, Isaiah xxx. 28. But Mr. Vessey set off into his profession with vain confidence in his heart, and an arrant he in his mouth. And, if he was the same at his end as he was in his race, it is clear that he never recanted his error, nor repented of it.

When I had received the letter from Woolwich, containing Vessey's life and doctrine, and had made strict inquiry concerning his converts, I was satisfied that he was the same in his ministry as he was in his profession. And, as he never was in connection with me, nor in church-fellowship with us, I was determined never to have any thing to do with him, notwithstanding Mr. Davis gave me such a wonderful account of him; for we are not to receive into our houses him that brings not the doctrines of Christ. To countenance such, and to bid them God's speed, is to share with them in all the mischief they do. And if I am highly reprehensible for this, it is neither matter of grief nor discredit to me.

Several persons, who found out that Mr. Vessey was in error, reported to me that he was an Arian, not knowing what his

heresy was. From this charge he endeavoured to vindicate himself by several letters sent to several persons who favoured him, And from this charge he might clear himself; for he was not an Arian, but a Sabellian; he did not deny the Godhead of Christ, but the Godhead of the Father and the Spirit; he denied the existence and distinct personality of God the Father, and of God the Holy Ghost. Where I was informed that he was an Arian, I wondered at it, knowing that his tutor was an obstinate Sabellian. And I told Mr. Davis that I had heard that he was charged with Arinism; which charge he denied, as well he might. However the heresy that he held is as damnable and as dangerous as the other; and this Mr. Butler knows now to his sorrow.

All the time that Mr. Vessey was at Woolwich, I never once heard that he laid claim to me as his spiritual father. But, when he was settled at Chatham, this report was brought to me; and sure I am, that he never got one notion that he held from me. But he found out that I was well known in Kent, and therefore this hopeless son intended to ride out on his supposed father's shoulders. And he did go into the Wilds of Kent, and had gone to my native place, if I had not sounded all alarm, and prevented it, and informed the people that I intended shortly to publish the charges brought against him, which my long journey into the country at that time prevented.

He declared (from 1 Cor. xv. 24-28), That, at the delivery of the kingdom up to the Father, then the Saviour's reign would have an end; and that the Godhead of Christ would then leave the manhood; and that Christ, as man, would be on a level with a common believer, only with this difference, he would be the Elder Brother. Which is a most daring, dangerous, and damnable construction put upon the text. For, touching the manhood of Christ, and his birth of the Virgin, he is not the elder brother, for Abel was born near four thousand years before him; and, setting aside the antediluvian world, there

were no less than forty-two generations that had passed away from Abraham to Christ, all which were before the birth of Jesus. And he is expressly called the son of Abraham, and the son of David; therefore his birth of a woman was not before them, but long after. Christ being the first-born of every creature, is what Mr. Vessey does not understand. Nor does the brotherhood that subsists between Christ and the elect rise merely from his assumption of human nature, by which he became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, consequently a brother according to the flesh; for, in this sense, he might be called a brother of all man kind: such, I think, the Scriptures intimate, when those mockers, who have no part in him, are charged with "speaking against their brother, and with slandering their own mother's son," Psalm i. 20. But Christ is a Son in a higher sense than by his own incarnation; and we are his brethren by our adoption, and by being partakers of the Divine nature, as well by his assumption of the human nature; we are begotten of God, regenerated and born of God— this makes us brethren in a higher sense than all mankind are.

For the sake of some poor weak souls who may have stumbled at the construction that Mr. Vessey has put upon that text, I will offer a few thoughts upon it, which I hope will not be contrary to the scriptures of truth. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

Then cometh the end—when he shall have delivered up the kingdom, &c. This text is not the only one that speaks of an end of the kingdom—there is a text somewhat like it in Daniel, His kingdom is that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even to the end, Daniel vi. 26.

But this kingdom and dominion, which is to be delivered up to the Father at the end, is, as I conceive, the empire or reign of grace; which Christ, as man, received from the Father by a delegated right.

The human nature that Christ assumed is called a body that the Father prepared: 'A body hast thou prepared me; then, lo, I come to do thy will, O God!' Heb. x. 5-7.

And as the Father prepared that body for him, so he anointed him in that nature to his kingly office: 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,' Psalm xlv. 7.

The Father not only anointed him, but he crowned him also: 'A crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer,' Rev. vi. 2. And again 'Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose light it is; and I will give it him,' Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.

And, as the Father gave him the crown, so also he gave him the kingdom. 'I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.' And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him, Dan. vii. 13, 14.

And, as the Father gave him a kingdom, so he also enthroned him. 'I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion,' Psalm ii. 6.

1. Thus God the Father prepared the body for him, Heb. x. 5.

2. And with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost he anointed him, Acts x. 38.

3. With glory and honour he crowned him, Psalm viii. 5.

4. A kingdom and dominion he gave unto him, Dan. vii. 14.

5. And upon his holy hill of Zion he set him, Psalm ii. 6.

And, when the Father had thus done, he put all things under his feet: 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hand; thou hast put all things under his feet,' Psalm viii. 6. Nothing excepted, but God himself; as it is written—But, when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that 'he is excepted which did put all things under him, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

And when he was thus crowned a revelation was given unto him (Rev. i.), a book sealed with seven seals; in allusion to the testimony given to the kings of Israel at their coronation, 2 Kings xi. 12. Which sealed book, or testimony, is the Book of the Revelation; and those who are enlightened into it may easily see his reign, both in providence and in grace.

This middle, or mediatorial, reign of Christ, is twofold. He is King of Zion, and King of nations—King of the church, and King of the world—Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou has given him. He keeps his throne of grace in Zion, and his throne of majesty in the world; for he doth not only reign in Zion, but from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

In Zion he governs by his power, his spirit, his gospel, and his grace; by his ministers and other officers, by the ministry of his word, by his ordinances, and by his glorious presense.

In the world he governs by kings, and by princes, &c. As it is written, By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth, Prov. viii. 15, 16. For he is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

This middle, or mediatorial reign in the hand of Christ is to continue till he hath put down all rule, all authority, and all power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. When the end comes, Satan, and all devils subject to him; sin, and all the train of its provocations; death, and all its spoils; wicked kings, princes, judges, and nobles; shall be all put down: and all sinners shall then be arraigned, condemned, damned, and destroyed. And, when the earth and all her works, devils and all sinners, are destroyed, all rule, authority, and power, will be put down, and an end put to his government as King of nations; for there will be no nations to govern.

So, likewise, when all the elect of God, the beloved Zion whom he hath chosen, all the general assembly, will be raised from their graves, and be united to their souls, and their vile bodies changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ; then shall all subjects of grace be brought, in a glorified state, even to God the Father, from whom Christ received them; and shall be delivered up in full tale, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. As a shepherd, he delivers up his flock; as a minister of the sanctuary, he delivers up his charge; and as King of Zion, he delivers up the kingdom. The militant church is now the triumphant one; grace is now displayed in everlasting glory; the gospel of truth is settled in heaven (Psal. cxix. 89.); Mercy is built up for ever, and faithfulness established in the very heavens, Psal. lxxxix. 2. Mount Zion is now become the heavenly Jerusalem. Preaching and hearing the gospel will be no more. His reign of grace, his middle reign, as King of Zion, will now have an end. His regal sceptre will be laid aside, or cease to be what it now

is. Christ has been subject to the Father all along: and this seems to be the last act of subjection touching the empire of grace. For so it is written, Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God: then, at that time, and in that act, shall the Son also himself be subject unto him. From the Father he received his kingdom and his chosen subjects, and to God he is accountable both for his reign and for them; and, being accountable and subjected to give up his accounts, he delivers up the kingdom of grace to the Father of glory.

But what then? Does his Godhead leave the human nature that he assumed? No; the word that was with God, and that was God, and that was made flesh, and dwelt among us, will abide so for ever. The child born, the son given, is an everlasting Father, Isaiah ix. 6. He shall see his seed, and prolong his days (Isaiah liii. 10.), longer than Adam or Methuselah either, even to all eternity, the world and all her works shall be destroyed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail (Heb. i. 12)—shall never cease to be. In and through the glorified humanity will the Godhead of Christ dwell, and shine to all eternity.

But is there now an end put to the Saviour's reign? Yes; an end is put to his reign of grace, as man and mediator; but not to his reign of glory, as over all, God blessed for evermore. Christ is King of glory in heaven, as well as King of Zion on earth: the former he has by right of nature, the latter by the gift of the Father. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory, Psalm xxiv. 7 10. And this God of armies, as King of glory, shall ever reign. For, though a throne of grace will not be needed as now, yet Christ's throne of glory shall still remain: for his subjects of grace shall then be subjects of glory, over whom Christ, as King of glory in his glorified

humanity, shall reign to all eternity; and his reign of glory shall never have an end. And so it is written, His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. Again, In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever—the dream is certain, and the interpretation sure, Dan. vii. 18. And again, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 15. When all the wicked are in hell, and all the saints in glory, as King of glory Christ shall ever reign: The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land, Psal. x. 16. Again, He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke i. 32, 33. Again, of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. All these scriptures which respect Christ as God, and as King of glory, declare that his reign of glory shall never have an end; and this is confirmed by what the Father said to him: But unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail, Heb. i. 8-12. In the above texts it is clear to be seen that the Saviour's reign of grace and reign of glory are interwoven together: the one hath an end, the other has none. The last text quoted shews that he created the heavens and all their hosts, the earth and all her inhabitants; and, when the latter is destroyed, he will reign in

the former. He made his angels spirits; they are the work of his hands, which he has a right to govern, being the Head of all principalities, and of all power. And, touching his assumption of human nature, angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him. 1 Pet. iii. 24. The latter he received, it was included in the Father's Gift (Let all the angels of God worship him); the former he holds as God, by right of nature; and this will never be given up. I conclude this head—that the Saviour, as King of glory, will reign over glorified saints and angels to all eternity; nor will devils and damned souls be left without an eternal sense of his terrible majesty.—Those who are so highly favoured as to ascend up into heaven, will find him there; and those who make their bed in hell, will find him there also, Psal. cxxxix. 8.

Having given my humble opinion of the end spoken of in the text, and of delivering up the kingdom to the Father, and of the Son being subject to him, I will now drop a few thoughts upon the last clause of the text; which is, That God may be all in all. This cannot mean, as Mr. Vessey describes it, that the human nature of Christ is to be left by the Godhead; because in that nature he declares that he is alive for evermore, Amen, Rev. i. 18. In that nature he is an everlasting Father, Isaiah ix. 6. God declares that he is a Priest for ever and ever. The word of the oath maketh the Son a priest, who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. vii. 28, And again, He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Therefore this cannot be the sense of the text.

And, as to the notion of the Father and the Holy Ghost being nothing but names, or office characters, which characters will then subside, and Christ's divine nature being the only person or personality, in the Godhead, being all in all, cannot be the sense neither; for God is three persons: There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, 1 John v. 7. And again, I and

my Father are one, John x. 30. He both not mean that I, and my Father, are two names and but one person; for the Father is a person, Feb. i. 3; and the Son is another person, 2 Cor. ii. 10. Therefore the Lord's meaning is, I and my Father (though two distinct persons) are one God; but not to the exclusion of the Holy Ghost, who is another Comforter, and consequently another person in the Godhead. Christ was distinct person from the Father, and equal in glory and majesty with him, before the world was made.—And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee before the world was. This glory here prayed for was the glory promised to his manhood, which was to be crowned with glory and honor. And here is a glory that Christ had with the Father before the world was, a glory with him as an equal to him, and not of him, as a defendant on him. The words plainly imply that the Father and the Son were two distinct persons in glory before the world was made; and that Christ is equal to the Father, the scriptures witness—Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, Zech. xiii. 7. And again, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6. And again, That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 23. Here are two distinct persons existing, equal in glory from eternity; and they are to have equal honour from all the saints, even to eternity. As it is written, And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, Rev. v. 13. It is clear that these glorified souls which are in heaven are not Sabellians, and it is as clear that they are not Arians; and yet, as they are now made perfect, and perfect in knowledge, it is not to be doubted but they are as wise in heaven as ever Mr. Vessey was when upon earth: and it is clear that they see not, nor do they know, any thing of the Godhead of Christ forsaking his manhood, and the manhood

being on a level with common believers; for they ascribe equal blessing, equal honour, equal glory, and equal power, to the Lamb, as unto the Father, and that for ever and ever. Hence it, follows that, if Christ be not God, their worship is idolatory; and, if he be nothing but an office character, their anthem is folly, for it is ascribing omnipotent power to a nonentity; and, if there be not two distinct persons, it will not be an easy matter to make common sense of the song; and, if Christ's reign of glory hath an end, they must err, who ascribe blessing, and glory, and honour, and power, to him for ever and ever; for the Lamb must include his manhood.

Furthermore, the Holy Ghost is essentially God. 'Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? Now the Lord is that Spirit: and, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' 2 Cor. iii. 17. Now, as the Spirit is God, and the church the temple of God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies it and dwells in it, and which Spirit shall, in the last day, quicken our mortal bodies, and fashion them like unto the glorious body of Christ, even then he will dwell in the church when in her glorified state, and that for ever. He will, I say, dwell in the church, and be a well of living water in it, and a Comforter to it, for ever. He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, John xiv. 16. And thus runs the tenor of the covenant, 'My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever,' Isaiah lix. 21. Hence it is clear that the Holy Ghost is God, and that he is an eternal Comforter, and that he will never depart from the church, nor cease to dwell in it for ever; this is secured by a covenant that cannot be broken. Thus blessing, glory, honour, and power, are ascribed to God and the Lamb for ever and ever; and the Holy Ghost abides in the church for ever and ever. And as to the human nature of Christ, in that he is alive for evermore, Amen;

in it he is a priest for ever and ever; in it he is consecrated for evermore, and ever lives to make intercession for us, though not then as now.

Hence it appears that the Arian's damnable heresy is refuted concerning a created God, or God by office, set up from everlasting. I am the First, and I am the Last, saith the Saviour, Isaiah xlv. 6. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me, Isaiah xliii. 10. Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God, Isaiah xlv. 6. Here the Saviour declares that there is no God to the exclusion of him. And, as the kingdom is to be delivered up to the Father, and blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, are ascribed to him for ever and ever, there can be no God to the exclusion of the Father, nor to the exclusion of the Holy Ghost, who will be a Comforter in the Church for ever. And, as for the humanity of Christ, he will, in his human nature, be the eternal Light of the saints; as it is written, And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, Rev. xxi. 22, 23. Paul's meaning, therefore, must be this—we have now, while in a militant state, a mercy-seat, a throne of grace to approach, a mercy-door to knock at, and have access to the Father by the faith of Christ; we have one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; and through the vail of his flesh a way is opened to the Father: but, when we are all brought to glory, the mercy seat, the throne of grace, will then appear a throne of glory; and, when we have all entered through the vail of his flesh into the Holy of Holies, we shall see God. Christ will then shew us plainly of the Father; the middle reign of grace will have an end, and the reign of glory will then appear wonderful to us all. And, though now we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth know

we him so no more; but God—Father, Son, and Spirit—shall be all in all: all to us, and all in us. Hence I conclude, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, these three are one, 1 John v. 7. And the saints shall all then be made perfect in one, John xvii. 23.

Mr. Vessey was in damnable errors. And, if God sends a man a strong delusion that he may believe a lie, it is no wonder that he pretend to a full assurance of faith. Solomon's fool rages, and is confident; but it is but the faith of a lie, and the confidence of a fool; at best. Nor does the triumphant departure of a man with a lie in his hand, and intoxicated with the wine of error, now stumble me. Mary Queen of Scots went to the block with as much fortitude in the principles of popery, as Mr. Vessey met death with in the principles of Sabellianism. But what of all this? Paul says that a man may be enlightened, as Balaam was when he saw the visions of God, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open. Yea, he may have tasted of the heavenly gift; that is, he may receive a spiritual gift, and feel a deal of joy, zeal, and energy, with it; as well as Alexander and Demas: the former stood heavy persecution, and the latter saluted the churches much. He may be a partaker of the Holy Ghost, as Saul was, and appear quite another man; and yet be nothing. He may taste the good word of God, as the thorny and stony ground hearers did, who heard it, and anon with joy received it. Yea, and taste the powers of the world to come; they may feel joy, they may feel a delight, they may feel energy and power, until Christ takes the talent away, and then they wither away, having no deepness of earth, no brokenness of heart, nor contrition of spirit; having no root in themselves; or, as Christ says, I know that you have not the love of God in you: and they wither for lack of moisture; that is, the well of living water, which springs, up into everlasting life, is not in them, Which is the cause of their withering or falling away. Paul, in the above place is speaking of gifts, and not of the grace of God. Nor

does he call this enlightening, this tasting the word of God, &c., and being partakers of the Holy Ghost, the things that accompany salvation. No; he tells the Hebrews that these things were found in apostates that fell away so as not to be renewed again unto repentance. But, says Paul, we are persuaded better things of you; things that attend the salvation of the soul; things that attend a real work of grace; that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; that your souls have got a savoury unctuous experience of the pardoning love of God. And, indeed, I cannot find those things that accompany salvation in all that catalogue of gifts. There is mention made of being partakers of the Holy Ghost; but nothing of being born again of the Spirit; nor of grace and supplication by the Spirit. He gave them great spiritual gifts: and in this sense he came upon seventy elders at once in the wilderness; and so he has come upon many who will never be saved. Paul says nothing, in all that catalogue of the hypocrite's attainments, about the forgiveness of their sins, nor of repentance unto life; nothing about a broken heart, conversion to God, or of regeneration; nothing of justification unto life, nor of liberty by the Spirit; nor of Christ in the heart the hope of glory; nor of being sealed to the day of redemption; nor of union with the living Vine, of access to God, or of fellowship with the Father and the Son; nor of being in covenant with God, or being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Read the following covenant blessings, and see if they are to be found in the catalogue of the hypocrite's attainments; which are things that always accompany salvation. I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, Heb. viii. 10-12. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: [but it is one

thing for the Spirit to come upon a man, and it is another for the Spirit to be a well of eternal life in a man] and I will take away the stony heart, out of your flesh, [this makes the saint to differ from the stony-ground hearer] and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will save you from, all your uncleannesses. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations, Ezek. xxxvi. 25 31. These are the things that accompany salvation; but they are not to be found among the hypocrite's attainments; nor are there any of the things which Christ spoke when he opened his commission. In Paul's catalogue of the hypocrite's gifts there are no good tidings to the meek; nor of binding up the broken-hearted; nor of liberty proclaimed to captives; nor of opening the prison doors to them that are bound; nor of the acceptable year of the Lord: nothing of comforting them that mourn; no beauty for ashes; no oil of joy for mourning; no garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, Isaiah lxi. 1-3. There is no poverty of spirit; no meekness or contrition; no hunger nor thirst after righteousness; no purity of heart, Matt. v. 3-8. All these, reader, are things that accompany salvation, such as no hypocrite ever had. Paul, in the sixth chapter of Hebrews, is describing some of the most accomplished hypocrites, who are not chosen vessels, but reprobates; and to me they seem to be preachers. And Paul gives us a description, 1st, of their high attainments; 2dly, of their fearful fall; and 3rdly, their dreadful end.

For it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, as Balaam was; and have tasted the heavenly gift, as Alexander and Demas did.

And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; [so was Saul, 1 Sam. x. 10. So was Balaam, Num. xxiv. 2. And the Spirit of God was upon Saul's messengers, and they prophesied, 1 Sam. xix. 20. And Saul sent other messengers, and they prophesied. And he sent messengers a third time, and they prophesied also, 1 Sam. xix. 21.] Paul goes on—

And have tasted the good word of God, as Balaam did when God put a word in his mouth; and as the thorny and stony-ground hearers did, who heard the word, and anon with joy received it; who for a while believed, but in temptation fell away, having no root in themselves; and as Judas, who took part of this ministry—the word, and a gift to preach it, and to do miracles. Yea, they may have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, and speak with the tongue both of men and angels, and yet be nothing in God's account. Paul adds—

And taste the powers of the world to come. If by the powers of the world to come be meant the gospel, they taste a joy and a delight in it; and if by the powers of the world to come be meant the power of working miracles, as is most likely, then many have had this. Many will say to me in that, day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name: and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity. In which they tasted joy, zeal, and delight; which always lift such men up with pride, till they fall into the condemnation of the devil And so it follows,

If they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance. And what is to hinder their falling away, seeing the things that accompany salvation are not in them? And seeing, also,

That they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. In their apostasy they shew themselves to be of the same spirit as the Jews, who crucified

Jesus through envy, and tried to put him to shame by a crown of thorns and a mock sceptre; and they deal with his cause, and his body mystical, as they did with Christ personal. And such hypocrites, when their reprobation is made manifest to themselves and others, are the most desperate enemies to Christ and his people. Paul goes on to touch upon God's husbandry.

For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessings from God. Here is the good ground, the honest and good heart, upon which Christ comes down as showers upon the mown grass, and as rain that waters the earth: this doth not wither for want of moisture, but it brings forth herbs (Prov. xxvii. 25) meet for the Trinity, by whom it is dressed. This, says Paul,

Receives blessings from God. This soil is blessed of God, and cannot wither, nor fall away, nor be cursed, nor be burnt, as the other barren soil is. As it follows:

But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected. These are the thorny-ground hearers, in whom Christ says, the word that they tasted is choked by riches, worldly cares, and the lust of other things, Mark iv. 19. But God's elect are not briers and thorns, but fir-trees and myrtles. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, (and these shall neither be cursed nor burnt); and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off, Isaiah lv. 15. But that which beareth briers and thorns is rejected. It is a full and undoubted evidence of their reprobation.—Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them, Jer. vi. 30. By which it is easy to see that Paul says nothing of these hypocrites but what Moses and the prophets have said. God says men shall call them reprobates, for the Lord hath rejected them; and

Paul says, That which beareth briars and thorns is rejected: and adds,

And is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. Some people pervert this passage of holy writ, and say that this hypocrite, in his great accomplishments, is a real child of God; and that it is impossible for him to fall away. But I say it is impossible for him to stand. For, let him have what gifts he may, they must all be taken from him in the year of jubilee, or in the gospel-day, Ezek. xlvi. 16. 17. He that hath not grace, but a gift, it shall be taken away, even that which he hath, Mark iv. 25.

They are nigh unto cursing. They are under the curse of the law, and never were delivered from it, but they are nigh unto it—nigh unto the execution of God's most dreadful curse, which they are ripening apace for, and are nigh unto, by crucifying the Son of God afresh, and by their being reprobates, not elect souls; rejected, not chosen in Christ; nigh unto cursing, never blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Whose end is to be burned. Whose decreed end is to be burned, body and soul, in hell fire; they being rejected, or reprobated, of God; And if this is the state of a child of God, then wo be to such a child! Any body is welcome to take up the pen and prove me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth, if they can. I have not a single doubt but God will enable me to defend it; and, if God spare my life, I will defend it. Prophecy abounds with the destruction of these briars and thorns. Read Isaiah ix. 18; x. 17; xxvii. 4; xxxii. 13. These hypocrites went far enough beyond Mr. Vessey. But these accomplished hypocrites, described by Paul, are no other than the house in the Saviour's parable, which Satan deserted till it was empty, swept, and garnished, and then he repossessed it; till the last state of that man was worse than

the first, Matt. xii. 45. Peter's dog that returned to his vomit belongs to the same select band, whose last end was worse than the beginning. But Paul goes on—

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Here Paul harps upon the bond of the covenant; the better things that accompany salvation are the work and labour of love: this is charity, which Paul calls the more excellent way; and without which, let a man have what gifts he may, he is nothing. In short, a man must be regenerated, born again, and renewed, before he can have any real appetite or relish for those spiritual things that accompany salvation. It is the new born babe, and not the unregenerate, that desires the sincere milk, or comforting nourishment, of the word of God. Hypocrites may covet and relish spiritual gifts, because of the double honour that attends a good minister of Jesus: and many covet for filthy lucre, and others because they are too idle to work for their bread. Yea, many of the basest characters have coveted this highest station, who were never worthy of the lowest room. Simon Magus offered large money for the power of being a minister of the Spirit; or of communicating the Holy Ghost to whomsoever he would, by the laying on of his hands; who, at the same time, was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, Acts viii. 23. But not so the soul that God has formed for himself.—The new man has a spiritual palate, a spiritual appetite, and a spiritual belly, John vii. 35. He tastes and sees that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him, Psalm xxxiv. 8. Here is a man blessed of God; and, if so, his soul is blessed with eternal life, for that is God's blessing; as it is written, Upon Mount Zion hath God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore, Psalm cxxxiii. 3. This man trusts, or believes, in the Lord; and he

tastes and sees that the Lord is good—his eyes see and his hands handle the incarnate word; and therefore the Lord must dwell in that soul, or he could not taste or relish the Lord's goodness to him.

But Paul's accomplished hypocrite, or false preacher, has no goodness in him, for he bears briars and thorns; nor does he stand by faith, but falls away; nor is he blessed, but nigh unto cursing; nor does he trust in the Lord, but in himself; nor does he taste of the Lord's goodness, but of the word of God, and the power of working miracles, or the power of the Spirit as Saul, his messengers, and Balaam, did. which are called the powers of the world to come. For the unregenerate soul's taste is vitiated by sin; he never relishes God's grace, nor his goodness. Peter will agree with me, that a soul can have no true relish for God's grace till it be born again.—As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house. I Pet. ii. 2-5. These souls were new-born; they had relished and tasted the grace of God; they were come to the Foundation that God had laid; had received eternal life; and, as lively stones, they were built up a spiritual house: but Paul's hypocrite was not upon the foundation, nor built up of God; for he fell away: and Christ says that the ruin of such a house is great, Luke vi. 49.

Peter gives quite a different account of the hypocrite, or unrenewed teacher.—He calls him a well without water.—the Spring of eternal life is not in his heart; a cloud but not belonging to the cloud of God's witnessess, for he had no rain in his soul; a speaker of great swelling words of vanity—without power, without savour, without life, and without salt. They promised liberty, while themselves were servants of corruption: they pretended to the glorious liberty of the children of God, while themselves were drudges and slaves to

the corruption of their own hearts lusts. They had escaped the pollutions of the world at their first setting off in a profession, which was their external reformation: but, though they had escaped the pollutions of the world by a reformation, yet they had not escaped the corruptions of their hearts by regeneration, for they were still servants to them. The holy commandment was delivered to them, as it was to Judas when he was sent forth, with the rest of the apostles, to preach—he had the office and commandment of an apostle; and thus took part of the ministry with them. But Judas, as well as Peter's hypocrite, both turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them; and so it happened, according to the true proverb, that dog returned to his own vomit again, 2 Pet. ii.

I have led thee this round-about track, reader, that thou mayest be enabled to distinguish between grace and gifts. Christ has various gifts to bestow on the children of men,—To Judas, with the rest of the apostles, he gave commandment to preach, to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils, Matt. x. 4-8. To others he gives knowledge, understanding, the speech of men and angels, faith to remove mountains—and yet not charity. To others he gives riches and honours, which are in the left-hand of Wisdom. And all these things have been given to men whose hearts were never established with grace; that is, their hearts were never settled with believing, pardoning, repenting, justifying, generating, reconciling, renewing, soul-humbling, self-abasing, sin-subduing, heart-comforting, and soul-reviving grace. The broken and contrite heart, that trembles at God's word' is a million leagues nearer the third heaven than the most accomplished hypocrite, garnished with all the above-mentioned gifts, tastes, attainments, or accomplishments. And all these, in gifts and appearance, went far beyond Mr. Vessey.

I know some will say that such preaching and writing as this cuts off nine professors out of ten throughout the whole church.—To which I answer—the Lord Jesus Christ, in his sermon in the sixth chapter of John, out of five thousand followers, cut off all but twelve; and there was one devil left even then. Others, who are of opinion that Paul's hypocrite (in (he sixth of the Hebrews) is a real saint, and one that cannot fall away, will not relish this doctrine of mine. But, if they cannot taste any sweetness in my insisting on an experience of the goodness and grace of God in the heart, I can appeal to them for confirmation of this truth—that tasting those gifts comes far short of the new-born babe's tasting that the Lord is gracious; because they have a greater relish for the attainments of a hypocrite, as described in the word of God, than for the unction of a saint, therein described. However, God has given me eyes to see (and I trust no man will be able to put them out) that plastering, bolstering, daubing, and vanishing the hypocrite ill becomes a minister of Jesus. Those who heal the wound slightly, crying, Peace, peace, when God has not spoken to the conscience, are no ministers of God, but men-lasers: and they that please men cannot be the servants of Christ.

I shall now make a few remarks on the letter from Chatham.

Quotation. Since we have had him in our church, either occasionally or as a settled minister, we have not been able to lay any thing to his charge, either in point of doctrine or Christian experience.

Answer. If the five persons who have signed this letter, and who have known Mr. Vessey only so short a time, could not charge him with error, eleven persons, who sat under him for several years, could, and have, charged him with damnable error#151;I say damnable; for all that are saved must be taught of the Father, be drawn to the Saviour, and be born

again of the Spirit. And the authors of this letter from Chatham can assign no reason why the testimony of eleven, persons should not be as valuable as their's, seeing they own that he was at Chatham but a short time; nor why the witness of a greater cloud, who knew him for seven years, should not counterbalance the lesser, who knew him as a settled minister only since last April, especially considering how apt people are to be lavished with novelty. I myself know that he was a Sabellian for many years; nor do I believe he was ever otherwise; for even this letter, now under consideration, savours a little of that heresy, and so I shall make it appear. As to their not being able to charge him with any thing touching "Christian experience"—this is not to be wondered at, having himself acknowledged that he never had any—he never had experienced a change of heart; and therefore no charge could be brought against him on that point, unless it was for the want of it.

Quot. But as a minister of Jehovah Jesus, he has performed the part of an evangelist, and given full proof of his ministry, as there are his living epistles, known and read of all men, many, very many, considering the small space of time he has been in these parts.

Ans. If he has performed the part of an evangelist, some souls must have been evangelized by him. And, if he has made full proof that he is a minister of the Spirit, then, doubtless, God must have ministered the Spirit by his preaching; and has sealed some souls by the Holy Ghost, under his ministry, up to the day of redemption; which souls must be so many seals of the approbation of God, and of his mission and commission from him—Living epistles, who are quickened by the Spirit, on whose minds, and on the fleshly tables of whose hearts, God has written his laws of faith, love, truth, and liberty (by the ministry of any instrument), so as for these epistles to shine in life and conversation—even so as for persons to read in their

life what God has written on their hearts—must be a proof that such are sent of God. Yea, this is a full proof that such a minister is blessed with a cloven tongue of fire; or that he is a minister of the Spirit, a vessel of honour, with the treasures of grace; a steward of the mysteries, and of the manifold grace, of God. But then where are these evangelized souls? where are these seals and living epistles, to be found, who are known and read of all men?—There are none to be found in Woolwich, who have received the Spirit by him, among all the converts he made there; nor yet at Streatham, or any other place in these parts: nor do I believe there is one at Chatham, or in all the world.

Let us now come to facts—facts are stubborn things. If there is such a "living epistle" at Chatham, he will be glad to tell others what God has done for his soul, and to give a reason of the hope that is in him, and of the experience that worketh hope. And I should be glad to see such a narrative, or to spend an hour in company with any one that has been evangelized by Mr. Vessey; for I think a real "living epistle" must greatly exceed Mr. Vessey himself, both in life and doctrine, if not the writer of this letter also. Besides, the space of six or seven months is not time sufficient to read a "living epistle" in, unless a man has a very extraordinary gift of discerning spirits; especially as such an one as Judas stood three years in his profession with-out being properly read by one, except the Lord himself. If Mr. Johns will point out the brightest of Mr. Vessey's living epistles to me, I will go down, in company with a few friends, and visit him; or I will bear his expenses to and from London, if he will visit us. But this will never be complied with; for I am fully persuaded, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that God never did, and that he never will, set his seal to the work of an unexperienced man, involved in confusion and errors. I have watched this matter narrowly for these eighteen years past; but I never saw it yet, nor shall I ever see it in Chatham. Neither Mr. Butler, nor any one of his

pupils, all the years they have laboured and toiled, ever brought one soul to God; nor do I believe they ever had access to God themselves: there is neither proof nor sign of it, or of any thing like it. That a pharisee may compass sea and land to make a pharisaical proselyte; that an Arian may make a proselyte to Arianism; and a Sabellian make a proselyte to Sabellianism; I do not deny but none of these ever were, nor do I believe such ever can be, instrumental (till purged from their errors) in the hand of God in begetting souls to Christ Jesus, nor of communicating the Spirit of God (which they never had themselves) to others. I have made many converts myself and have often been deceived by them; of the goodness of whose state I have indulged many comfortable hopes: but time has always discovered a great difference between the converts that I made and those that God converted by my instrumentality.

Quot. He was the great power of God!

Ans. Persons, who can talk and write at this rate, do not appear to me to be properly acquainted either with God or themselves; consequently must be very improper judges either of doctrines or experience. Who is Paul, and who is Apollos?—only earthen vessels with the good treasures of grace in them, that the excellency and the power might be of God, and not of them. Indeed they preached Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God; and to him power is to be ascribed: but to call a poor crawling worm the great power of God is insolence and blasphemy. Christ will never give his power and glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. Indeed the Samaritans, from the least to the greatest, gave heed to Simon Magus, saying, This man is the great power of God. Acts viii. 10. But then there is a reason assigned for it; which is, that he used sorcery, and bewitched the people. But it is no true sign that those are "living epistles" who thus copy after a people bewitched.

Quot. Our thoughts, therefore, are thus—that he believed there are not three Gods, but one undivided essence; yet three persons in office, name, and character, as far as with respect to the covenant of redemption; and not a trinity of substances, (as some blindly affirm) acting by one divine essence; but a trinity of persons in one self-existent Jehovah. So that, when a believer, approaching a throne of grace, calls on God the Father, he calls on Jehovah the Father, Jehovah the Word, and Jehovah the Spirit also.—Yet there are not three Jehovahs, but one Jehovah.

Ans. This quotation, and what follows, is not delivered as Mr. Vessey's doctrine, but as the thoughts of the church; which errs as much in thinking (for the want of experience) as Mr. Vessey erred (for the want of experience) in doctrine. And I believe no person, really taught by the Spirit, ever believed there were three gods.— It is not my faith, nor ever was. But I suppose this is obliquely thrown at me, as Mr. Vessey privately charged me with error, because I believed in three persons in the Godhead. You allow that there are three persons in office, name, and character, as far as with respect to the covenant of redemption. I believe, also, that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead—distinct in name, distinct in office, and distinct in their personal properties; and that each person is God in all glorious perfections.—And this the scriptures witness: for omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence; life, light, love; wisdom, goodness, understanding; truth, grace, eternity, immensity; immortality, and immutability; are, in the scriptures of truth, ascribed and attributed equally to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. These three persons in office, name, and Character, are as far three persons as with respect to the covenant of redemption. I see no cause for limiting the existence of these three persons to the covenant of redemption; for the Bible informs me that they are three persons farther a great deal. I believe they are distinct in the

work of creation.—At the creation of the world the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Ghost—Let us make man in our own image. When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by him (saith the Saviour), as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Prov. viii. 29, 30. The Father spoke, and it was done; the Word went forth, and created; and the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. Thus creation was a joint work; nor was there any thing made by either person to the exclusion of the other.

The Lord commanded, and they were created, Psalm cxlviii. 5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made, John i. 1-3.

The Spirit moved on the face of the waters, Gen. i. 2. And by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens, Job xxvi. 13.

Thus the work of creation is ascribed to all the three persons, and so as not to the exclusion of either. There is one God the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, I Car. viii. 6. And one Holy Ghost, that fileth all things. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Psalm cxxxix. 7. The work of creation, therefore, was a joint work, between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and Christ declares that they have worked together ever since—But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, John v. 17.

And, as they were three distinct persons in the work of creation, so they are in the work of providence.—The Father hath appointed the times and the seasons; the Son executes

his Father's will; and the Spirit creates and renews the face of the earth, Ps. civ. 30.

And so the same in redemption.—The Father appointed the Son, and prepared a body for him, and was with him in his sufferings in it; the Son obeyed his Father's will, and offered himself a sacrifice to him; and the Holy Ghost was the anointing on him, and through the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God.

And so also in the glorious work of regeneration—The Father of his own will begets us by the word of truth, the Holy Ghost produces a spiritual birth, and Christ is formed in the heart the hope of glory. And so in giving life to dead souls.—The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will; and it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, John vi. 63.

This appears to me to be the plain truth, and there is both consistency and harmony in it. And it is clear, from the word of God, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three persons—more than in office, name, and character: and further than as it respects the covenant of redemption, which is what this letter allows. For they were three distinct persons in the Godhead from all eternity, and to all eternity will be the same. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up, says the Saviour, from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, Prov. viii. 22, 23. And to God and the Lamb will glory be ascribed for ever and ever. The sacred oracles are entirely silent about limiting the plurality of persons to names and office characters, and those, too, only as far as it respects the covenant of redemption.

I shall now transcribe, verbatim, all that is written in the letter from Chatham touching Mr. Vessey's doctrines, excepting some passages already quoted.

Quot. "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and, in truth, John iv. 24. Our thoughts, therefore, are thus—that he believed there are not three Gods, but one undivided essence; yet three persons in office, name, and character, as far as with respect to the covenant of redemption; and not a trinity of substances, (as some blindly affirm) acting by one divine essence; but a trinity of persons in one self-existent Jehovah. So that, when a believer, approaching a throne of grace, calls on God the Father, he calls on Jehovah the Father, Jehovah the Word, and Jehovah the Spirit also.—Yet there are not three Jehovahs, but one Jehovah. There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, John v. 7.

In worshipping his and our blessed Master, he believed him to be (as well as man) the uncreated, underived, eternal, self-existent Jehovah—namely, Jehovah the Word. Oh, dear Sir, many times hath he exulted in his soul that the new creation could now worship God, that rolled the stars along, and spake all things into existence, in our own nature. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He did not believe him to be the first of created things, and yet his blood sufficient to atone for sinners, and his righteousness to adorn, or rather justify, them from all things of which they stood condemned by the transcript of Deity, the law.—No; he positively insisted that he was no less than the uncreated, underived, eternal, self-existent Jehovah. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star, Rev. xxii.16. So that the believer worshippeth, in the person of Jesus, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. Also, in approaching the Deity in the person of the Spirit, he did not believe him to be a blessing or an emanation from the refulgence of Deity, but the very God, the eternal, self-existent

Jehovah. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you; and, when he is come unto you, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, John xvi. 7, 8. Should any ask, Could no power, short of the eternal power of God, reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?—he answered, None. He believed that those parts of the written word, which speak of an inferiority of persons in the Deity, referred only to the manhood of Jesus.—Such as, He grew in wisdom and knowledge with God and man.—Again, Of the day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Son, but the Father, &c. And of the Spirit of Jehovah, it or they allude to his operations on the heart of the believer.—Such as, But, when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.—Again, if ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of his, &c.

So, therefore, the believer worshippeth the great, the inconceivably and incomprehensibly great Three in One, and One in Three.

We have not gone into so great a field of matter on the important subject as we might have done; but hope that, to an unprejudiced mind, these heads will suffice.

He further insisted (and to which we agree) that nothing short of the operative power of Jehovah the Spirit can reveal this mystery to the heart,—Great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, justified in the Spirit, believed on in the world, and received up into glory, Tim. iii. 16."

This, reader, is what the church at Chatham thinks to be the doctrines that Mr. Vessey taught. I have copied them exactly as they are written. And we may clearly see that the writer of

this letter (who is a schoolmaster) has set before us some very great words; which are often brought forth to dazzle the eyes, and cheat the mind, of a simple believer.

Here are, likewise, some sharp throws at erroneous men, such as those that hold three gods; others, who hold Christ to be the first of created beings, as the Socinian; and others, again, who hold the Spirit to be a blessing or an emanation from Deity!

When we read such great words as these, reader, and the author cutting sharply at destructive heresies, we are ready to think that such, in the Spirit, must speak mysteries, and be wonderful men. However, we must not fall down and worship every image that the children of men may set up—we must prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. The serpent's seed are very cunning; wiser in their generation than the children of light; and always crooked in their paths, evasive in their words, and allegorical in their speeches—they say one thing, and mean another; convey one meaning to us, and retain another meaning to themselves: for a heart that is not good can never be honest. If you were to ask an Arian whether he believes in Jesus—he will tell you, Yes. Ask him if he believes him to be God—he will answer in the affirmative: but he means that Christ is God in no other sense than by office, as magistrates are—there be lords many, and Gods many. Ask if he believes Christ to be the express image of the Father's person—he will tell you, Yes: but he means in no other sense than Adam was—in the image of God created he him. Should you ask him if he believes the eternal existence of Christ—he will allow it: but his meaning is, that Christ had a human soul pre-existing, which the Father made and set up from everlasting; though Christ is called the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven, which no human soul ever was. And it is clear that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that in them is; so that nothing was made, above or below,

till those six days began therefore his human soul could not be made from everlasting, as nothing, in heaven or earth, was made till then. But from everlasting to everlasting Christ is God.—I am the First and the Last, the Almighty. If the first, then there was none before him to create him; and, if the last, there will be none to outlive him.

Our souls, Christian reader, are precious to us, and truth is precious; therefore we must look well to our way, and take heed how we hear. This letter from Chatham, which is sent to vindicate Mr. Vessey and his doctrine from the charge of heresy which is brought against him, does not contain the true confession of a Christian's faith; nor shall I fall down and worship the God that Mr. Johns has therein declared; for this same letter is pregnant with nothing but Sabellianism. And, though Mr. Johns denies that Mr. Vessey was an Arian (or one who denies the Godhead of Christ), yet, from this letter, it appears to me that he denies the Godhead of the Father and the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, which is Sabellianism. Is my reader alarmed at this?—Yes; and perhaps he is offended at it too.—To be offended at my eyesight is to be offended at God, who opens the eyes of the blind. When my reader has been as much staggered, stumbled, and knocked about the head, by the devil, and the professors of the depths of Satan, as I have, he will look before he leaps, and not strain at a gnat nor swallow a camel. If Mr. Johns chooses to enter the list as an antagonist, I will dispute the polar with him, and my reader shall look on and judge betwixt us. We must not be baffled out of our faith, nor out of common sense, by a few scholastic phrases, nor yet by the triumphant departure of the wise man's fool, who is allowed to rage and be confident. There are some hypocrites, whose excellency reaches to heaven, and whose head touches the clouds, (Job xx. 6) who will never be admitted into the kingdom of God.—We now come to examine the letter.

Quot. He believed that there are not three gods, but one undivided essence; yet three persons in office, name, and character—as far as with respect to the covenant of redemption; and not a Trinity of substances.

Ans. There are not three gods; yet the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and they are equal in power, equal in glory, and equal in divine majesty. And these three are distinct persons, and they are distinct in their personal properties; and yet co-equal in one undivided essence, and co-eternal in one undivided substance. Mr. Johns allows that there are three persons in office, name, and character—as far as with respect to the covenant of redemption. These gentlemen are aware that to make an agreement, contract, bargain, or covenant, requires more persons than one.—Two persons, at least, must be engaged in making and signing a covenant; and a third person is required as a witness to it. And it is clear that there, are three that bear record in heaven. But then what are these three? Mr. Jones says three persons in office, name, and character—as far as with respect to the covenant. This, reader, is the doctrine of Mr. Vessey; this is Sabellianism—three persons in name and office only in the economy of the covenant: which names and offices will be replaced or restored to the one person of Christ, as God, when his manhood is separated from the Godhead; and so God in one person will be all in all. Mr. Johns adds—but a trinity of persons in one self-existent Jehovah.—There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. These are three persons in office, &c. a trinity of persons, in name and character, in one Jehovah. Mr. Johns allows that there are three persons, but then they are only persons in name and office, as far as respects the covenant.—His meaning amounts to this—there are three personal characters in one Jehovah, and one Jehovah in three personal

characters; for by three persons he means only in office, name, and character, as far as it respects the covenant.

But three personal characters in one Jehovah, and one Jehovah in three personal characters, comes far short of being the Lord God of Israel, who is three distinct persons in one God, and one God in three distinct persons, from everlasting to everlasting. And these three are more than personal names and offices. They are real persons, distinct persons, self-existing in the Godhead from all eternity. From everlasting is God the Father; and from everlasting was the Word set up by the Father, to be future man and mediator by incarnation; and from everlasting did the Holy Ghost agree to be the future anointing on the human nature of Christ, when the fulness of time came for the human nature to be taken into union with the person of the Son of God. They are distinct three persons. The Father is on the throne, the Son at his right hand, and the Seven Spirits before the throne. And they are distinct in their personal properties: for the scriptures ascribe understanding, knowledge, willing, choosing, speaking, working, and operating; yea, existence, life and motion, to each of the three persons in the Godhead.—Holiness, truth, power, light, life, and love; eternity, immortality, and immensity; are possessed, in all their fulness and perfection, by each person in the Trinity. And, though there are not three Gods, yet there are three persons equally God in one Elohim. And, though there is not a trinity of substances, yet there is a trinity of distinct persons, existing from everlasting to everlasting in one undivided substance: and these are more than three names, or three persons in office character. Behold, saith the Father, I send an angel before thee: beware of Him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him, Exodus xxiii. 20, 21. Here is the Father speaking—the Logos spoken of—and the Holy Ghost was in Moses, and upon the elders.

To sin against God in his law is not sinning against a name or office, but against a divine person, who is a lawgiver, and whose anger burns to the lowest hell.

And to crucify Christ afresh is not sinning against a person in name only, but against a person that is eternally God,—the author and finisher of the law of faith; who will fill the throne of judgment, and pass the awful sentence of damnation upon all infidels and hypocrites.

And to sin against or blaspheme the Holy Ghost is sinning against a divine person also, who is the giver of the law of life; who will never grant a pardon to such an enemy in this world, nor in the next.

God is an everlasting king.

Christ is king of grace and king of glory.

And the kingdom within, us stands in righteousness, peace, and joy, in

the Holy Ghost. And Father, Son, and Spirit, three distinct persons, will ever live and reign one God, world without end. Amen.—Mr. Johns goes on:

Quot, Many times hath he exulted in his soul that the new creation could now worship God that rolled the stars along, and spake all things into existence, in our own nature.

Ans. If Mr. Vessey's soul exulted in this, it was exulting in a lie; for all things were not spoken into existence in our own nature; nor was the human nature made, or Adam formed, until all other things were in existence. Nor is the new creation of grace to be ascribed to the Saviour, so as to the exclusion of the Father. The Father worketh hitherto, and I work, John v. 17. Nor yet to the exclusion of the Holy Ghost—for all these

worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Quot. So that the believer worshippeth, in the person of Jesus, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.

Ans. This looks like exhibiting four persons. However, it is another scrap of Sabellianism: for, as Mr. Johns allows the persons in the Trinity to be persons only in office, name, and character, as far as it respects the covenant, he here brings in only the person of Jesus, and the worship of three personal names in him. But the Lord God of Israel is one Lord; and three names are not to be worshipped in one person, but three persons in one God, and one God in three persons.

Quot. Also, in approaching the Deity in the person of the Spirit, he did not believe him to be a blessing or an emanation from the refulgence of Deity.

Ans. This good man seems to talk entirely without book. What does he mean by approaching the Deity in the person of the Spirit? The Spirit—who is a divine person, and who fills immensity; who is the Seven Spirits before the throne in heaven above, and who dwells in every saint throughout the earth beneath; under whose influence, and by whose kind aid, we are enabled to approach God the Father shining in the face of Jesus Christ—is a person in the Deity, and I know of no Deity to the exclusion of him.

This emanation, reader, from the refulgence of Deity, is a notion held by many heretics; the meaning of which is this—that God is one person; that the Spirit is essential to God, as my breath is essential to me; that the Spirit flows from God, as my breath flows from me. But I and my breath are not two witnesses; nor can such an emanation from the divine Majesty be a distinct witness, and another distinct comforter. If God be but one person, there can be but one divine witness, and but

one to bear record: but there are three distinct persons, and three distinct witnesses; and these three bear record in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. John v. 7.

Quot. And, of the Spirit Jehovah, it or they allude to his operations on the heart of the believer; such as, But, when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, ever the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

Ans. It or they allude to his operations. The pronoun plural seems to me to signify persons, instead of the operations of one person on the heart of a believer. In short, the tenets of Mr. Johns, according to my judgment, are these—He believes that there is one divine person, which is the Saviour; and that, when the Holy Ghost or the Father is mentioned in his letter as being God, Christ appears sometimes in the character of the Father, sometimes in the office of the Spirit, and sometimes in his own covenant character: and, though he allows that there are three persons, yet he means that they are only persons in office, name, and character, as far as (and no farther than) with respect to the covenant; and those who hold that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead are thrown at as holding 'three gods,' or 'a trinity of substances; which is not true of me, nor of any who are taught of God.

There is a treatise, reader, left in manuscript by Mr. Vessey, that the people at Chatham talk of publishing; some part of which has been transcribed and sent to me, and which I will here insert and examine.

An extract, taken from a treatise of Mr. Vessey's, entitled 'A late Alarm of Antinomian Fire proved to be without cause.'

Quot. It is an undeniable truth that there is but one eternal, incomprehensible, self-existing, and immutable Jehovah;

without form, parts, or passions; who filleth immensity, and is every where present.—Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Deut. vi. 4. That this all-wise, supreme Being hath been pleased to make himself known to the heirs of glory, in the mystery of redemption, by three distinct personal names and covenant characters—Father, Word and Holy Ghost; which, although they are distinctly three in office, name, and works, yet are but one in essence, spirit, and nature. There are three [mark that, three] that bear record in heaven the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one [mark that, one] 1 John v. 7.

And the best knowledge that ever a mortal attained to of this profound mystery is this—to enjoy communion with God, as my sovereign, electing, gracious, and unchangeable Father in Christ; and sensibly to feel his everlasting love shed abroad in my heart; the Spirit of adoption enabling me to call him my Father without a stammering tongue; to have fellowship with the Son of God in all his finished salvation; and so as to enjoy, through faith in him, peace with God through the application of the merits of his precious blood to my conscience; and to find acceptance with God, and boldness to approach near unto him by the Saviour's righteousness imputed to me; and find Satan overcome and bound, death bereaved of his sting, and clear acquittance and deliverance from the bondage and condemning power of the law; liberty from the thralldom, guilt, love, and power, of sin; and all by faith in Jesus. These inestimable blessings are experienced by the fellowship of the Holy Ghost operating in the hearts of the elect, as a Spirit of love, of power, of counsel, of might, of life, of a sound mind, of knowledge, and fear of the Lord. I say this is the best and only saving knowledge we can have of the ever-blessed and glorious Trinity, agreeable to the apostolic benediction—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you. Amen.

The above, reader, is Mr. Vessey's confession of faith.

1. He says that there is but one eternal, incomprehensible, self-existing, and immutable Jehovah; which is true.

2. That this all-wise Being hath made himself known to the heirs of glory, in the mystery of redemption, by three distinct personal names and covenant characters—Father, Word, and Holy Ghost; all which amounts to this that there is a trinity of names in one person, and one person in a trinity of names; or three names in one person, and one person in three names. This is Sabellianism—this is old Butler's heresy: which appears to me to be blasphemous, insolent, and damnable; for it is denying the person of God the Father and of God the Holy Ghost. The king of Babylon's vision and confession is sufficient to overthrow Mr. Vessey's heresy—This matter is by the decree of the Watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. This dream I Nebuchadnezzar have seen, Dan. iv. 17,]8. Here is a plurality of Watchers, or Holy Ones, in one Most High, and one Most High in a plurality of Watchers or Holy Ones. Should any object that these Watchers and Holy Ones are angels, I answer—Decrees are not made by them, nor is the decree ascribed to angels in the text, but to the Most High, even by Daniel himself, in the 24th verse. Nor are they ever called Holy Ones; though they are called Holy Angels. Holy One, and Holy Ones, belong to the fountain of holiness; even God, who is holiness itself, and the author of all holiness, that is found either in saints or angels. Furthermore, the saints in the Hebrew text (Dan. viii. 24) are expressly called the people of the Holy Ones.

In Mr. Vessey's confession of faith, touching the knowledge of God, here is no repentance, conversion, or change of heart, mentioned.—Mention is made, indeed, of an application of the

atonement; but no sense of sin, nor sensible pardon or forgiveness of sins, described; all which (according to his own acknowledgment at the prayer meeting) he was an utter stranger to. Most of the expressions used in the above are borrowed from my writings; only they are confusedly jumbled together, for want of an untuious experience of the power and grace of God, and that the theft might not be perceptible.

The following extracts, concerning the decrees of God, &c., are taken from the manuscript treatise of Mr. Vessey before mentioned; and communicated to Mr. Huntington, desiring him to shew whether the sentiments therein contained are agreeable to the word of God, by John Pavey, of Kingston, Surrey.

Page 7. The only wise God and our Saviour, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working, from all eternity, according to the good pleasure of his will, and by his irrevocable decree, fixed the eternal state of all his creatures, both angels and men, without any foreseen cause or condition whatsoever; either of the reprobate or the elect; or of sin in the reprobate, or righteousness in the elect. This is evident, if carnal reason drop the cause, and the testimony of God in his word be admitted as evidence and judge.

Page 12. Again—Nothing foreseen or foreknowns, in either elect or reprobate, could cause God, as a sovereign, to save the elect or damn the reprobate. See Rom. ix. 18, 21.

Page 11. Again—The reprobate are emphatically termed vessels of wrath, and the elect vessels of mercy; the former made for dishonour and destruction, and the latter for honour and glory: and Jehovah's will is the sole cause of both.

Page 27. Again—Man was not rejected or reprobated on account of any foreseen cause, but according to the good pleasure of his (God's) will. Again—It was not because the

Lord foresaw that mankind would fall by iniquity, and consequently prove base and unprofitable, that he thus reprobated and rejected them; but their proving thus is rather the result or effect of their being rejected, as is evident from the following text of scripture; as it is written—Reprobate silver shall men call you, because the Lord hath rejected you, Jer. vi. 30. Again—Did Israel of old harden their necks, and turn a deaf ear to the exhortations and admonitions? They did; and the reason or cause is assigned. For the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath, Jer. vii. 29. See also Heb. vi. 8.

Page 9 and 13. Again—The unerring wisdom, immutable will, and irrevocable decree, of Jehovah, without any prior or foreseen cause determined the state of the reprobate. And the struggling of the twins in Rebecca's womb shewed the everlasting enmity that God hath fixed between these two houses or families; as it is written—I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; i. e. between Satan and his Family, and between Christ and his family. This truth was preached clearly in heaven, to an Arminian in hell, See the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19.

Page 39. Again—As touching the elect, some have asserted that the love of God is wholly founded upon the meritorious obedience of his Son; i.e. by the Saviour's undertaking our cause to obey that law we had broken, and suffer the wrath and curse due to sinners; that hereby the Father hath been won over to love and pity the elect: and, furthermore, that this love of the Father is still kept fixed upon his children, and his bowels of mercy are still kept sounding towards them by the perpetual verbal intercession of Christ. Such doctrine is awful; it is turning things upside down, corrupting the word of God, and marring and setting at nought the precious doctrine of his

eternal love and mercy, which is the sole moving cause or spring of all good towards his people.

Page 26. We have an undoubted right to use any terms or phrases whatever, admitting that the doctrines they are meant to convey can be clearly proved from the oracles of truth, for to the pure all things are pure.

The phrase original sin is no where to be found in scripture; yet none but an Arian, a Pelagian, or Quaker, would deny it. So, likewise, the word perseverance cannot be found in scripture, nor the word reprobation. So, likewise, the word trinity doth not occur any where in sacred writ; yet who but an Arian, a Socinian, or a Sabellian, would attempt to overthrow the truth which that term is intended to convey? When the scripture declares, that there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and again. That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledging of the mystery of God, (the Holy Ghost), and of the Father, and of Christ, Col. ii. 2.

Page 11. Foreseen sin could never cause God to hate the reprobate; for, if foreseen sin had been the cause of reprobation, then it could not have been said that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

WILLIAM VESSEY.

Ans. My reader has seen, in the letter from Woolwich, Mr. Vessey's argument in the defence of God's permissive will, and against his decretive will, touching every event: but here he has run quite into the other extreme. In the beginning of the above extracts the Saviour (who he thinks is the only person in the Godhead) is mentioned as fixing the eternal state of all creatures: and the elect are brought in, but not in the scriptural way of God's choosing us in Christ Jesus; nor

could he thus bring it in, for the Father and the Spirit, according to his doctrine, are only names and covenant characters. God's decree of reprobation, or of passing by, is not set in a scriptural point of light. It is stated without any regard to man's fearful fall. No mention is made of man's destroying himself; nor of being reprobated for sin, and fitted for destruction by it; nor of the power of God enduring, with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22. And indeed the whole of his preaching and writing appears to me to be little else but the wild rant of an uninspired man, without the ballast of humbling grace, and without the guidance of the Holy Spirit; whose arrogance and presumption have led him to be wise above what is written, and to stumble upon the dark mountains; running from one extreme into another, without any judgment in his goings or consciousness of his ignorance. He was involved in old Butler's heresy through all his profession, yea, in every trace of it. The intercession of Christ is a doctrine that Butler denied; and Vessey, in these extracts, has a stroke at it, but does speak it out quite so plainly as old Butler did. And indeed the children of falsehood always bring out their bane at first with caution; till the bait is swallowed, and the mind blinded and intoxicated; and then it comes by gallons. The devil's aim, by leading men into such daring presumption, is to distress the saints, and to harden hypocrites: and he teaches them to wriggle and twist just like himself; to say and gainsay; confess, and then deny what they have confessed.

In stone of his letters, Mr. Vessey denies that he ever was in errors touching the doctrine of the Trinity: and, in a letter to Mr. Olliff, he acknowledges that he erred in that doctrine, and makes confession for it; and that he thought to comprehend the mystery by his blind reason; which is an acknowledgment that he had nothing else to guide him—as I believe he never had; for, though he confesses that he erred, and likewise mentions Butler's dreadfull fall, and the shock that it gave him;

yet, at the same time, he held fast the heresy to the last; and it appears even in the same letter, His letter follows:—

William Vessey to John Olliff and Andrew Blain sendeth greeting; wishing grace, mercy, and peace.

Dear Friends,

When I had the pleasure of being last in your company (which was at Hope-street Meeting), if you remember, you gave me to understand that a report had been carried, to some friends in London concerning my being in an error respecting the Trinity: of which report I had heard something before, but nothing positive until then.

Great indisposition of body, lack of time and opportunity, prevented me at that season from saying much about the matter. I have, therefore taken this opportunity of communicating my thoughts unto you on the subject; not doubting but you will thereby be able to discern whether the report be true or false.

The momentous subject now under consideration was for a considerable time a very puzzling and perplexing point of doctrine to me; the reasons therefore are very obvious.—I was led to consider it more a matter for reason to comprehend than for faith to credit; and aimed more at a speculative knowledge of the mystery than an experimental acquaintance with it in the heart; by which means I was incessantly tossed to and fro from one whimsical imagination to another; and never could settle on any, nor could it otherwise be, whilst blind reason was followed and consulted as leader and judge.

As I considered that Tritheism, or the doctrine of three Gods, was wholly inconsistent with the scriptures, I endeavoured to reconcile matters to my foolish fancies, by confounding the distinct personalities in the Godhead into one; and so

considered them merely as so many names, manifestations, and office characters; the same as any dignitary on earth, having a plurality of names, and executing various offices.

These chimeras being set up as orthodox and infallible, I laboured hard to make the scriptures stoop thereunto, but all in vain. I saw they stood like so many immoveable bulwarks, full proof against every attack of my fleshly artillery; for frequently some passages of scripture would present itself pointedly against my reasonable system (as I termed it); the light of which would so dazzle the eyes of purblind reason and human wisdom, as often, in a measure, convinced me that, however reasonable my notions appeared to be, they were contrary to the word of God; whereby all my impotent logic was frequently confuted, and my many attempts to settle myself in Antitrinitarianism were frustrated.

Although such texts of scripture, at various seasons, made some pretty deep impressions on my mind, and often hurled me into great confusion, yet I endeavoured to evade the force of them, and quiet a griping conscience, all I possibly could, by slightly passing over them, or hoping they were wrongly translated. However, all this work was without effect; for, the more I laboured here, the more was my understanding mizzled and beclouded.

At length, being an eye and ear witness to the dreadfull fall of one who it seems had been several years very deeply involved in the same error, and who had also been a means of strengthening me therein, I was effectually convinced of the awful business in which I had been engaged, and likewise saw clearly the deep pit I had so narrowly escaped falling into: the result of which was—my vain imaginations were brought down, my corrupt ideas dispersed, and my high looks and lofty spirits laid low.

Carnal reasoning and sophistical arguments being now laid aside, my heart in a manner humbled, and sick of its own ways, I was led to ask wisdom of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; and, being thus brought into a teachable frame of mind, was kept much at a throne of grace; often admiring the unwearied patience and long forbearing goodness of my heavenly Father in not suffering me to sink lower into those depths of Satan, which, in all probability, might have terminated in Arianism, or even Socinianism itself: for the beginning of strife against any one revealed, truth is as the letting out of water, which at the first begins to descend in small drops; anon they come out more quick and large: from dripping it next proceeds to running; and thence, issuing forth in rapid torrents, it sweeps down all before it; and, but for free, sovereign, and invincible grace, this truly awful state had been mine: but, being enabled to obey the enjoined exhortation; viz. leave off contention against God, scripture, and conscience, before it be too far meddled with, I have, I trust, since been established in the present truth, upon which I briefly offer a few thoughts.

In treating of the oneness or unity of the essence or Godhead of Jehovah the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, I humbly conceive they are not to be considered in this respect as plural, but one; agreeable to the following scriptures—Hear, O Israel, the Lord our Gods (as the word Eloi or Elohim might be rendered) is one Lord, Deut. vi. 4. Again, For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, &c. I Tim. ii. 5. Again, But unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, I Cor. viii. 6. Again, Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one, Gal. iii. 20. And again, There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, 1 John v.7. Hence it is obvious, from these, with many other scriptures of the like import, that, although the Father is very and eternal God, the Word very and eternal God, and the Holy Ghost very

and eternal God; yet in essence, being, or existence, they are but one only divisible and eternal Jehovah. But to be more explicit; though the Father is not the Word nor the Holy Ghost, but distinct from them both; though the Word is not the Father nor the Holy Ghost, but distinct from them both; and, likewise, though the Holy Ghost is not the Father nor the Word, but also distinct from them both in personality, name, office, and operation; yet they do not exist distinctly, individually, and independently, from and of each other, but are to be considered as existing in one incomprehensible essence or Godhead.—Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

As touching this oneness of essence in the Godhead, he is frequently spoken of in his Word in the singular number; as in the following—I am that I am. Again, I am the Lord thy God. Again, I am God, and beside me there is none else with numerous others of the like import. But, when the Tri-une God speaks of himself personally, he doth it in the plural number; as, for instance, And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. Again, And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil. And again, and the Lord said, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language. And again, Who will go for us? And, furthermore, to confirm this doctrine Jehovah frequently assumes three distinct personal forms; sometimes of men, at other times of angels. In these forms he appeared unto our Father Abraham, to give him the promise of a seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. These Abraham offered sacrifices to, worshipping and addressing as Lord; and no doubt but in one of these he clearly saw the Father of mercies in choosing and electing, setting apart, and confirming in his dear Son, every vessel of mercy; in another he saw the promised seed, which was to bruise the serpent's head, and to bring life and immortality to light by the gospel, and who (according to the flesh) was to spring from his own loins; and in the other he saw the Spirit of truth, whose work is

to convince of sin, of (an imputed) righteousness, and of judgment; and to seal every elect sinner unto the day of redemption. Thus Abraham [saith Jesus] rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad.

Furthermore, the inseparable union of the divine essence is set forth unto us in the following scriptures. In the beginning was the Word, (viz. in the beginning of the creation was Jehovah the Word made manifest, as the great Creator and Upholder of all things, and also as the Redeemer and Deliverer of the elect), and the Word was with God, (mark the union) and the Word was God: the same (Jehovah Jesus) was in the beginning with God, John i. 1, 2. Again, Jehovah the word speaketh of himself, as touching this mysterious union, on this wise—I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father, John xvi. 28. Again he saith, No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 18. Hence observe, although the Word was personally incarnate and on earth, yet as to his oneness of essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he was then in God and with God.

Sometimes we find that the whole Godhead is comprised under the appellation of Father, to shew the mysterious union and oneness thereof: as you read, Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Mal. ii. 10. Again, Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from [Jehovah the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost] the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, James i. 17. Again, when a disciple of our Lord requested him to shew unto him the Father, he receives this reply—Hast thou been with me so long, and hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me [i.e. by the eye of faith, which always views the Godhead in him] hath seen the Father also. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father

in me? The Father that dwelleth in me he doth the work, John xiv. 8, &c. Here we are not to understand the Redeemer as speaking in reference to the person of the Father, as it would not only be erroneous, but also absurd, to say that God in the person of the Father was incarnate, it being the Word, who was made flesh: therefore I understand it thus that whoever, by the operations of the Holy Ghost, hath seen Jehovah the Word in human flesh, hath, as to his oneness of essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, seen the whole Godhead in him; for, as touching the unity of the divine Three, we are told that in that human nature, which was mysteriously begotten and conceived in the womb of the virgin, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; not personally, but essentially. With respect also of the Holy Ghost; though, as was before hinted, he is distinct from the Father and the Son, as to personality, name, office, and operation, yet in essence he likewise is one with them; as we read—But, when the Comforter is come, [saith Jesus] whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. John xv. 26.

Moreover, in speaking of the distinct personalities in the Godhead, and their oneness of essence, we consider it in the following light. The Father from all eternity sanctified, or set apart his elect to everlasting life in Jesus Christ. He gave them, in the bond of an unalterable covenant, to his dear Son, that he might purchase them of incensed and injured justice by the price of his precious blood, and rescue and redeem them by power out of the hands of all their numerous and potent enemies, by whom they were taken captive; as he saith, Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me. From everlasting also Jehovah the Word undertook our cause, became our Surety and federal Head, and covenanted to perform all the conditions requisite to our complete salvation in our room and stead; as he saith, I will redeem them from death; I will ransom them from the power of the grave, Hoses

xiii. 14. Jehovah the Holy Ghost also undertook to make known unto those objects of eternal love these secret and wonderful designs, by quickening their dead souls, and sealing thereon the electing love of the Father and the complete salvation of the Son. Thus the Spirit, speaking by David, saith, I will declare the decree; and again, I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall grow as the lily, Psalm ii. 7, and Hosea xiv. 5. And it was this Spirit who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets unto the elect, who testified and foretold beforehand of the sufferings of Jesus, and of the glory which should afterwards be revealed. Thus these three bear each his record in heaven, by the which an everlasting covenant is ratified and made sure to all the chosen seed, for out of the mouth of these three infallible witnesses is every word thereof established.

In this eternal counsel, purpose, and decree of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is manifested his discriminating love to poor sinners which is spoken of distinctly, in reference to each personality in the Godhead. Thus the Father's love is spoken of on this wise; God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. Again, the love of Jehovah the Word, who was made flesh, is distinctly spoken of thus; To him [Christ] that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c. Also the love of God the Holy Ghost in condescending to dwell in the bodies of the elect, as the Spirit of love, of power, and of sound mind, is as distinctly spoken of in these words, Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, &c. This free and unchangeable love of our Tri-une God is the threefold cord which can never be broken, and that binds every elect vessel with himself together in the bundle of life.

Now, from what has been last hinted at, the following inferences may be drawn. It would be very erroneous and absurd to bind together into one these three distinct

personalities in the Godhead, because the very nature of a covenant carries in it this idea—that more than one must be engaged in the making thereof; and that each one concerned therein must necessarily execute his different office assigned him, agreeably to the conditions thereof, even so also it would be equally erroneous and absurd to imagine that three essences or deities individually sat in council, to agree upon these weighty concerns of our redemption, the same as three individuals presiding over a nation might convene together in order to enter into certain agreements relative to the welfare of their subjects; as this would be launching into Tritheism on the one hand, whilst the former would be launched into Sabellianism, or Antitrinitarianism, on the other; both which ought to be carefully avoided, as it is affecting to be wise above what is written, which is a snare of the devil, by which many are entrapped. Therefore the unity, or oneness of essence, of the sacred Three, respecting their purpose of love and grace towards the elect, is clearly pointed out in the following scriptures, The Lord [Father, Word, and Spirit,] hath appeared of old [from eternity] unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I [Jehovah the Holy Ghost] drawn thee, Jer. xxxi. 3. Again, having made known unto us the mystery of his will [viz. the secret purpose of the undivided Three touching the salvation of the elect] according to his good pleasure, which he purposed, in himself, Eph. i. 9. Furthermore, when the apostle of us Gentiles is treating concerning the unsearchable depths, of Jehovah's counsels respecting election and reprobation, he speaketh on this wise: Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, &c. Rom. xi. 33. Here he sheweth the oneness of the mysterious three; but, in touching upon the selfsame point in another place, he speaks of the three distinct persons in the mysterious one; thus, That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to

the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 2.—Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord.

Lastly, with respect to the work performed in the hearts of the elect; the scriptures every where speak of this as wholly the work and office of Jehovah in the person of the Holy Ghost, as we read, When the Comforter is come, he shall reprove [or convince] the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, John xvi. 8. Hence observe, that in this, and every other part of the scriptures, the work of conviction is attributed to the Holy Ghost: therefore to say that God in the person of the Father, or of the Word, executeth this office, would be repugnant to the plain testimony thereof; yet, nevertheless, in setting forth the indivisible unity of the divine essence in this respect, as in every other, it is clear they do not operate individually or separately from each other; but that whatsoever the Father doth, even that doth the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and that whatsoever the Word doth, even that doth the Father and the Holy Ghost; and, also, that whatsoever the Holy Ghost doth, even that doth the Father and the Word; all conjointly as respecting their essence, though not their persons. Hence it is the office of the Holy Ghost to lead or draw sinners to Christ. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Father is also said to perform this work. None can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. This is also attributed to the Son; as he saith, And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Furthermore, faith, which worketh by love, is wrought in the elect by the conjoint operations of the Tri-une God in the person of the Holy Ghost. Hence he is emphatically styled The Spirit of Faith, and as (considered personally) is the giver thereof; as we read, For to one is given, by the same Spirit, the word of wisdom, &c., to another faith by the same Spirit. This is also spoken of respecting the

Father and the Son. When Peter confessed his faith in and concerning the Lord Jesus, he receives this reply—Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood, hath not revealed this [mystery of faith] unto thee: but my Father which is in heaven. We are also exhorted to look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. Lastly, the bodies of the elect are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; and where this heavenly guest resides there is no less than the whole Trinity. Hence we are said to be an habitation of God through the Spirit. For God (the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. Again, Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man, love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. I shall now conclude with a few remarks upon the whole.

It is plain, from what has been already hinted, and from the whole tenor of divine revelation, that there is in the incomprehensible Godhead a plurality or trinity of subsistences or persons, though not plurality or trinity of deities or essences. How these exist in three and yet one, and how they exist in one and yet three, is a profound mystery, and known only unto God; this being one of the secret things which alone belong unto him. And all those who attempt, through a vain curiosity, (for it is nothing else) to pry into this bottomless and shoreless ocean, in order to explore the reasonableness and propriety of such a system, or the way and manner of the mysterious existence of the Tri-une Deity, are rashly endeavouring to break through the limits that God has set around his holy mount; and such will find, sooner or later, that the Lord will break through upon them, and destroy (if not their souls, yet) all the wood, hay, and stubble, of fleshly wisdom carnal reasonings, aspiring thoughts, and vain imaginations, which they have been so busy in building up; for who ever fought against God and prospered? None.—For whoever are engaged in this perilous work, or any other of the

like import, are strangers to soul-prosperity; and are full of jargons, contradictions, strifes, contentions, confusions, and darkness: and well they may; for who by searching can find out God (as to the nature of his being and existence)? Who by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection (even respecting his common dispensations of providence and grace)? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea, Job xi. 7, 8. For my own part, I never more desire to make an attempt of diving into this immense abyss, but to stand at a proper distance, and, with pleasing wonder and admiration, sing with an inspired apostle, O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first, given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory, for ever. Amen. Rom. xi. 33, &c. When I have had occasion to treat of this subject, in public or private, I have generally been led to enforce more the necessity of a heart, felt experience of this mystery than a scientific knowledge thereof in the judgment; for I doubt not but you will readily agree with me that they are the best Trinitarians who are savingly acquainted with the Father's electing love, the Son's redeeming grace, and the heartcheering companion of the Holy Ghost; without which a man, with all his accumulated knowledge, is no more than sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. I must confess that I am not very fond of the terms persons or subsistences, being rather ambiguous, because they seem to carry in them an idea of a plurality of gods; by which weak minds, through misconstruing and wrongly applying them, have been much perplexed and tried thereupon. And not only so, but it often gives room for sceptics to cavil and contend against those truths we are endeavouring to advance by such and such particular terms

and phrases; which, were they omitted, or more seldom used, and the plain text more adhered to, those difficulties might perhaps be obviated in some measure. However, it appears to me that we are not condemnable in making use of any term or phrase whatever, admitting that the doctrines which they are meant to establish, and the idea by them which we mean to convey, are wholly agreeable to the divine oracles; and whenever I find a person raising contentions about words and phrases, (which, though they may not immediately occur in the scriptures, yet the sum and substance of their meaning are contained therein) I generally take it for granted that such manifest thereby a dissatisfaction to, and a deep rooted enmity against (not the words merely, but) the very doctrines themselves, which we mean to establish thereby. Therefore I very frequently make use of the terms above mentioned, as they appear to me to be sound and good, so far as they are restrained to the personal distinctions in the Godhead; but have ever exploded them, as respecting the oneness of the divine essence; the last of which, peradventure, may have given rise to the late reports.

As I firmly believe that the whole fulness of the Godhead is in the Father, the same in the Son, and the same in the Holy Ghost, I am led to worship them at times distinctly and separately, by praise, supplication, and thanksgiving, to each, according to the various dispensations I pass under; and am persuaded that I have felt the Lord's sensible approbation therein: this several can testify (if they pleased) both here and elsewhere, who have attended my ministry; which I never could or should have done, had I (as hath been reported) held that there is but one person in the Godhead, or at least that the divine Three are but names, (as manifestations) office-characters, or nominal distinctions; for to address a mere name, office-character, nominal distinction, or manifestation, appears to be nothing more than refined idolatry, and rank nonsense. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

God, and him only shalt thou serve. I have ever manifested a disapprobation to that (too much adopted) method of making use of earthly similes to represent, or rather to define, this unfathomable mystery of the Trinity; which conduct I deem to be unscriptural, and consequently unwarrantable, since Jehovah has given this challenge; To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto me? Isaiah xl. 18. It is true the inspired writers have been led to ransack, as it were, the whole creation for similitudes to represent the various operations of the Spirit of grace, the different dispensations of God in the world and in the church, as also the person and work of Jesus, and the beauty and excellency of his beloved spouse, &c., yet there is not a patriarch, prophet, or apostle, throughout the whole volume of revelation, who have attempted, by any simile, metaphor, allegory, or figure whatever, to set forth the way and manner of the being or existence of the Tri-une Deity. Therefore the report that I should use the similitude of three candles, whose light terminates in one effulgence, or any other figure or metaphor whatever, is wholly groundless and false.

I must confess, also, that I frequently adventured to deviate a little from the too much frequented path of human tradition, respecting the sonship of Christ; wherein he is generally held forth as begotten by the Father, as touching simply his deity: which idea appears to me very unscriptural, and also derogatory to the majesty and glory of his essential Divinity. Therefore the doctrine of a begotten God I should ever wish to treat with contempt.

If we trace the scriptures upon this last mentioned head, we shall soon perceive that, wherever Jesus is spoken of therein as being begotten, or respecting his being a son, they either allude to his incarnation, his manhood alone, or his resurrection from the dead. Hence he is called the only-begotten of the Father, i.e. as to his manhood, which alone

was begotten in so miraculous and mysterious a manner; for this was the promise to his virgin mother, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing [the immaculate humanity of the Saviour] which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, Luke i. 35. Furthermore, when Jehovah the Word took our nature upon himself, thereby the two natures entering into a mysterious conjunction, and appearing in one complete Saviour, he is spoken of on this wise, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Again, when he bringeth the first, begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. Thus as all the glory of the invisible Godhead appeared conspicuous in the person and work of the manhood, as also in all the miracles he wrought, and in every word he spake; he is therefore said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; which cannot allude to his Godhead simply, but to the manhood in union therewith. For, however near an image or likeness may resemble the original, yet it cannot be the original itself. Therefore in this respect the Father is greater than he; but, as touching his divinity, he thinks it no robbery to be equal with God. Furthermore, as to his being begotten; it is written in a certain Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; which passage is cited in the Acts as alluring to the Saviour's resurrection, as we read, And we declare unto you glad tidings; how that the promise, which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us his children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. He is therefore called The First Begotten from the dead. See Heb. i. 1, &c.; Acts xiii., 32; and Rev. iv. 5. From all which it is evident that Jesus Christ, as to his incarnation, mere manhood, and resurrection from the dead, was really and verily begotten and born; consequently, in these respects he is a Son; but, in respect of his essential divinity, (simply considered as such) he is the uncreated,

unbegotten, undivided, and unoriginated, source of eternal power, might, majesty, and glory, the same as with the Father and the Holy Ghost; to whom be equal and undistinguished glory by all the church, throughout all ages, and world without end. Amen.

Thus have I undisguisedly, and without reserve, briefly given you my thoughts upon this much controverted point of doctrine; and do positively affirm that these are the things I have invariably taught, in all places whithersoever God in his providence has called me to speak in his name. Whether they are from heaven or from man, I now leave you to judge, For he that is spiritual judgeth all things.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost; even all the unmerited blessings of the glorious and ever adorable Trinity, Israel's one God, be with you, and the whole household of faith, now and for evermore. Amen.

Even so prayeth your unworthy brother in the Lord, and willing servant for Christ's sake,

WILLIAM VESSEY.

Woolwich, December 1790.

Ans. In this letter, reader, you have (1.) an acknowledgment of his confusion and ignorance, and of the way which he stumbled and blundered on; and of his own blind reason being his only guide while prying into that glorious Mystery, and that his notions were nothing but his own Whims and fancies.

2. He informs you that he was both an eye and ear witness of the dreadful fall of that presumptuous wretch Butler, mentioned by me in the former part of my narrative.

3. And still his old heresy appears;, for his notions of three persons in the Godhead are confined to personality, name, office, and operation.

4. That Jehovah frequently assumes three distinct personal forms; which are made out to be two that of men, and of angels. In these forms he appeared unto Abraham. These Abraham offered sacrifices to, worshipping and adoring as Lord. Whereas no man hath seen God at any time. Some have heard his voice, but none have seen his shape. Nor did Abraham worship the three men that appeared to him. One was our Lord, the other two were angels. Nor did God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost, ever assume the form of men or angels; But Vessey says, In one of these forms Abraham saw the Father of mercies. In choosing and electing, setting apart, and confirming in his dear Son, every vessel of mercy. In another [human form he saw the promised seed, and in another form he saw the Spirit of truth. This is Mr. Vessey's description of a trinity of human and angelic forms, and Abraham's view of them. What arrogance, confusion, and presumption, are here!

5. In the beginning of the Creation was Jehovah the Word made manifest as the great Creator and Upholder of all things, and also as the redeemer and Deliverer of the elect.—Whereas at the beginning of the creation there were none of the elect to manifest himself to.

6. He contradicts the notion of the Trinity appearing in three human forms to Abraham, by asserting that no man hath seen God at any time—The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

7. All the three persons are comprised under the appellation of Father, the first person (in order)in the Trinity.

8. By the text which expresses all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ, he does not understand it of the fulness of every attribute or perfection of Deity dwelling in the person of Christ, but of the whole Trinity dwelling in the human nature of Christ. In short, while he labours to shun the error of dividing the substance, he does nothing but confound the persons, in the Godhead, throughout the whole letter.

9. You have again mention made of three distinct persons, as to personality, name, and office; and of it being erroneous and absurd to bind together, into one these three distinct personalities.—What strange and awful language is this!—And how has the Almighty baffled and confounded this arrogant fool, who, in the pride of the devil, is finding out to perfection the existence of his Maker!

10. We are informed that it would be erroneous and absurd to imagine, that three essences, or deities, individually sat in council to agree upon the weighty concern of our redemption. He cannot see three persons in the scriptures without three essences or deities; which three persons did sit in council about the work of creation, and redemption too; Let us make man in our own image.—And again, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both, Zech. vi. 13. Which does not exclude the Holy Ghost, who reveals the peace that the Father ordained us to, and which the Son made by the blood of his cross, and who is the Spirit of love and peace in all the churches.

11. Quot. Therefore the unity or oneness of essence of the sacred Three, respecting their purpose of love and grace towards the elect, is clearly pointed out in the following scriptures.—The Lord [Father, Word, and Spirit] hath appeared of old [from eternity] unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving

kindness have I [Jehovah the Holy Ghost] drawn thee, Jer. xxxi. 3.

In this quotation, reader, you have one Lord (Father, Word, and Spirit). appearing, from eternity, to another person, called me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I (Jehovah the Holy Ghost) drawn thee. This account amounts to five persons: and what the church says of herself, and of God's drawing her in time, is applied to the Saviour, as done to him from eternity.

12. Quot. Lastly, with respect to the work performed in the hearts of the elect. The scriptures every where speak of this as wholly the work and office of Jehovah, in the person of the Holy Ghost.

Here the work of grace is ascribed wholly to the Spirit!— Though it is the Father that draws us to Christ, it is Christ that cleanses and receives us; and it is the Spirit that regenerates and renews us. But Vessey says, this is wholly the work and office of Jehovah, in the person of the Holy Ghost. By which he means that there is but one person in the Godhead, which is Jehovah the Saviour—who works in the person of the Holy Ghost; which he views as no more than a person in name. Take it which way you will, it is absurdity and nonsense. And indeed I never read such daring presumptuous insolence in all my life before. His being permitted to continue for ten years offering such affronts to God, and insulting the Almighty in so awful a manner, is a proof, with a witness, of God's being what he has revealed himself to be—The Lord God, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, &c.

13. The above quotation is all contradicted in the next page: for, although he says, The whole work of grace is performed by the Spirit; and the work of conviction, in every part of the scriptures, is attributed to the Holy Ghost; therefore to say that God in the person of the Father, or the Word, executeth this

office, would be repugnant to the plain testimony thereof; yet he has contradicted this, by asserting that whatsoever the Father doth, even that doth the Word, and the Holy Ghost. Nor do the scriptures attribute the work of conviction altogether to the Holy Ghost—the law is preached to convict and condemn the whole world, that they may all become guilty before God. And every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me, saith the Saviour. But bringing souls to Christ is attributed to the Spirit, by perverting this text, as he words it—Hence it is the office of the Holy Ghost to lead or draw sinners to Christ. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. This shews that Mr. Vessey sees no difference between the Father sending the law home with power to revive sin and slay the sinner, and then leading the poor condemned criminal to the Saviour, and the Spirit, who sweetly leads us into all truth, and into every holy and right path, after we are born again, The Father draws us, as criminals, to his dear Son; and the Holy Ghost leads us, as sons, in the paths of truth and peace.

Quot. Furthermore, faith, which worketh by love, is wrought in the elect by the conjoint operations of the Triune God, in the person of the Holy Ghost. Here, reader, are four persons—the Tri-une God, which is three persons in one God, operates in the person of the Holy Ghost; which must be another person, and which is another branch of his abominable, heresy—that, though there are three persons in name or office, &c., yet the Tri-une God, or trinity of names, works only in one person. The mystery and work of faith is jumbled together in the same confused way.

15. The Most High is called a system. He likewise cautions others to keep their proper distance; while, at the same time, he is attempting to describe the glorious mystery without one beam of light, truth, or consistency.

16. He tells us that he endeavoured to enforce a heartfelt experience of this great mystery upon the minds of his audience; whereas he never had any experience of it himself: if he had, the Almighty would not have resisted him, and confounded him for his pride, as he has done, which is visible in every part of his letter.

17. He is not fond of the terms persons or subsistences; which he says are ambiguous ones, and seem to convey an idea of a plurality of gods. He still keeps barking at the mystery, Satan driving him on to it, and God confounding the fool while, he is at it; for a trinity of persons subsisting in the Godhead is clearly revealed in the scriptures, and without any ambiguity at all.

18. After having confessed his Sabellianism in the former part of his letter, he here denies that ever he held any such principles; for to address a mere name, or office, is idolatry!,—This contradicts all his confessions.

19. He rejects making use of any, simile touching the mystery of, the Trinity; which he deems unscriptural; though the Almighty him-self makes use of the emblems of wind, Water, and fire.

20. He has a stroke at the sonship of the Saviour; whereby he has accepted the challenge given to all the world—Who shall declare his generation? (Isa. liii. 8 ;) and has presumed to treat it with contempt.

21. Christ being called the first begotten Son, is all applied by Mr. Vessey to his incarnation, or to his manhood,—which never was begotten at all, but made. He was made flesh, made of a woman, made of the seed of David, made under, the law. And, as touching his manhood, he is without father; and, as touching his Godhead, without mother.

Thus, reader, you have seen the darkness, ignorance, confusion, and presumption, of a man who has tumbled and stumbled upon the dark mountains for ten years, without a beam of light into any one text that he has quoted. You have seen, in the first part of his letter, a confession of his heresy; and in the latter part an absolute denial of it. For my part, such arrogance and presumption I never read before, and wish never to read the like again. However he is dead; and it was a kind providence that God removed him out of the world, that he might do no more mischief. But the worst of it is—his heresy did not expire with him; for many in London are leavened with it, which nothing but the grace and Spirit of God can eradicate. Another letter, from one who has been brought out of this snare of the devil, follows—and then I have done.

Reverend Sir,

Agreeably to your request I proceed to give you an account of the doctrines preached by Mr. V. during my abode in Woolwich. But, had I not been convinced by the Holy Ghost under your ministry of the following things, I never could have been prevailed upon to produce a single testimony against Mr. V., as I was so zealously affected by him. The things then, which I have before alluded to are these—The difference betwixt gifts and grace—betwixt a vain presumptuous confidence and that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God; which purifies the heart, and works by love to God and our neighbour—betwixt a man speaking with the tongue of men or angels, and the tongue of the wise; which I have proved, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, to be health to my soul—betwixt that knowledge which puffeth up, and that knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is declared to be eternal life—betwixt a well furnished head, and a heart rooted and grounded in the love of God—betwixt the flaming zeal of a hypocrite, supported by the love of popular applause, and that zeal which is according

to knowledge, or that love of Christ which constrains a man to endure all things for the elect's sake and, lastly, that abominable error, denying the three persons in the Godhead.

The first time I ever heard Mr. V. open his mouth in public was in a room pertaining to his father-in-law. The subject was concerning the decrees of God. And he introduced himself to his audience thus—Don't you be afraid, says he, that I shall soar too high; or lose my wings in my flight, for I shall surely find my way down again. And then followed a harangue concerning the power, omniscience, and omnipresence, of God—that not a single atom that floated in the air, nor a single blade of grass that clothes the field, but what were all directed by his hand. But before this he said, I know that the elect can stand these things, and, as for the others, I care nothing about them. But such another dry morsel surely never was set before perishing sinners.

After his chapel was opened the chief thing he seemed to aim at was to open the dark and mysterious passages of scripture, whereby a deal of light was communicated to the hearers, but I cannot say grace. As for my part, before this I was almost totally blind to those dark sayings and metaphorical expressions which he seemed to explain: but, after I had got a little understanding in these things, it was my chief study to follow after them more than after righteousness, faith, charity and holiness; without which, the apostle declares, no man shall see the Lord. I took more delight in this than in keeping up communion and fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ—more in this than in taking heed to my ways, or making straight paths for my feet. So that I know, from experience, if a man understands all mysteries, and lack charity(the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost)he is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. But this false and delusive light served at once to puff up my mind and nurse my pride; the result of which was—a vain and

presumptuous confidence, a hard heart, a blinded mind, and a contempt of every one who did not possess this new light; although, in scripture language, it is properly called darkness. And I have often wondered, since I have been convinced of these things, that God had not consigned me over to the condemnation of the devil: but his mercy endureth, and Jesus hath said that none shall pluck his people out of his hands. Again, when preaching concerning the believer's interest in Christ, he declared that, from the time a Christian had believed with the heart unto righteousness, no one could ever more doubt of his interest. He said he might be tempted to doubts, but not to give way to them. I myself, said he, have been above eight years in the ways of God, and have never had a single doubt concerning my interest in Christ. Again, when preaching from these words—And be made partakers of the fellowship of his sufferings; which, says he, is to believe in his death and sufferings; thus it is a precious, thing to have fellowship with him in his sufferings. This, I believe, is not the apostle's meaning in that passage. But again, he preached, a whole sermon in order to overthrow the doctrine of the Trinity; and declared that there were not three persons, but one God: in three different characters, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What he said to prove this error I cannot remember; but, upon serious reflection, I can now discern his preaching was with a great degree of pride, presumption, and arrogance, Though, as I then thought, he was clear in many of the doctrines of the gospel; such as election (his favourite topic), repentance, the new birth, the necessity of effectual calling, the sovereign grace of God, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, his atoning blood to purge the conscience from the guilt of sin, &c.

Now, Sir, I shall give you a short account of my happy deliverance, from the aforesaid error respecting the Trinity. About three years and four months ago I came to hear you at Providence Chapel. In the course of your sermon you were

led to speak against Arianism, clearly proved the personality of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; which at once cut up all the false notions I had imbibed concerning the Trinity. I went away, much distressed in mind, to pray for forgiveness; but could not, as it seemed to me to be unpardonable. I continued so for some time, during which period my airy notions, high thoughts, and exalted imaginations, began to come down. I still continued to hear you; but had neither a hand to reach, nor teeth to chew, those precious things that were held forth and set before me: so that I well understood that passage, which often followed me—Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. According to the good pleasure of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, I heard you one Lord's day describing how bent the children of God were to backslide, both in heart, practice, and judgment. And you were shewing how far some of them had gone in each of those particulars; but more especially concerning errors in judgment: and you pointed out what gross ideas some had imbibed concerning the Trinity; and had been convinced of it, and reclaimed.—And you confirmed it with this scripture—They that murmured shall learn doctrine, and they that erred in spirit shall come to understanding. I believe in my heart most of that discourse was intended for me; because the Lord broke the snare, set my soul at liberty, and filled me with godly sorrow, gratitude, and thankfulness, to God for his long suffering mercy and faithfulness, in waiting to be gracious to such a rebel. When the sermon was over, I went to the vestry-door, in order to tell you of my happy deliverance; but my heart and eyes were both so full, that I was obliged to retreat. Ever since this, you and your doctrine too have had a place in my heart and affections, and I believe ever will; though I have had many sharp rebukes and reproofs from you for what has been amiss, and many a comfortable word when dejected and cast down.

I saw three friends from Woolwich yesterday, and asked one of them (who had been a deacon of his) if Mr. Vessey did not preach thus concerning the Trinity?—His answer was, He did; and I received it from him too.

Pray, Sir, excuse this scrawl, as I have but little time to spare. I beseech you to remember me at a throne of grace, as I labour under a heavy cross at present.

I remain your friend in the perfect bond of everlasting love,

John Hogg.

British Museum, Nov. 26,. 1792.

William Huntington

A Feeble Dispute with a Wise and Learned Man

Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king,
who will no more be admonished. Ecc 4:13

TO THE READER.

As Mr. Bramah asserts that my letter to him is no less than a disgrace to myself, and a publication of my own shame; and that many of my friends, to whom he has shewn it, are of the same opinion which letter, God knows, I wrote from principles of conscience; I find myself under the necessity of publishing the same, together with his excellent answer, and the whole of the correspondence that has since passed between us. And I think there is nothing in my letters to displease a conscientious friend of Christ, or to disgrace a faithful and zealous minister of the New Testament, who is unwilling to be brought under the power of any.

As Mr. Bramah promises to print my illiterate letter verbatim as it stands, I have, in return, desired my printer to do the same justice by his proper and formal answers, that the wisdom and learning therein displayed may not be altogether lost to the world.

W.H.
Church street, Paddington.
December 10, 1793.

The Feeble Dispute, &c.

To MR. BRAMAH, PICCADILLY.

SIR,

I WAS surprised at the eight-pound draft that you sent me, as I had made up my mind, and likewise charged Mr. and Mrs. Baker never to take a mite of you towards the house of God, because I 2000 always judged your religion to be unsavoury.

The foundation on which I build, the king of Zion whom I serve, the God that revealed himself to me and saved my soul, is not a created spirit, nor a demi-god, nor a god by office, nor a subordinate Jehovah, nor yet a creating instrument, nor a human soul pre-existing; but a divine He, that took a whole human nature on him, and made his soul, an offering for sin; who in his divine nature is the first and the last, the Almighty. If this article is lacking in your faith, your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins; for, "*If ye believe not,*" saith the Saviour, "*that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.*" All God's children are taught of him; but these are none of his lessons. You got none of these instructions on your knees. This wisdom is not from above; nor do such persuasions come from him that called me. You got all these fables from men of corrupt minds; men with a bridle in their jaws, causing them to err; men given up to strong delusions, that they might believe a lie, and be damned; men before of old ordained to this condemnation, and ordained to deceive others; deceiving and being deceived. Before you occupy the seat of the scornful too long, let us have some account of Christ's teaching you, of his renewing you, of his cleansing you, of his healing you, proclaiming absolution to you, speaking peace to

you, and taking possession of your hearts; shining into it, and filling it with life, light, and love. While you are a stranger to these things you art not a subject of the kingdom of God, for that stands in power; not in lies, nor yet in confusion. And until you are born again you cannot see this kingdom; and without an experience of the above things you will, you must, and you shall err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. And, if ever a divine power should reach your heart, you will not ascribe the glory to a phantom, much less to a vain imagination, or high thought of your own brain, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Whenever the arrows of God's quiver enter a sinner's heart they bring all these high things down, and every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Then you will own, but not till then, that He, who rides in the chariot from conquering to conquer, is the Most Mighty, both in glory and in majesty. And, if you never acknowledge this in time, you shall in eternity, when his enemies shall lick the dust. If you choose to become an antagonist, you know where I live. My Master stands in no need of help from an enemy.

I have returned your draft, not daring to put it among the offerings of those who minister to Jesus of their substance; for men who offer must submit themselves to the Lord first, and then bring their offering, not to a human Saviour, but to the Lord of the whole earth. See Psalm lxxviii. 30; Micah iv. 13. For my part, I love honesty; and. I cannot conceive how a man of such consummate wisdom as Mr. Bramah could send eight pounds to support a place and a preacher, whose religion and doctrine are nothing but deception, and serve him for nothing but ridicule; and, as it is plain that I have sowed no spirituals in his heart, I choose to reap no carnals from his pocket. Those that are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, are not to be received in God's house, nor yet to be deprived of their property, because their money is to perish with them.

Your's in faithfulness,
truth, and honesty
W.H.

To MR. HUNTINGTON.

Sir,

I HAVE at last found leisure to inform you, that this day fortnight I received a very extraordinary Letter; it was not attended with either date or place of abode, and I assure you, sir, had it been without a signature too, the unequalled rarity of its contents would have been fully sufficient to have directed me to its author.

I must, sir, in the first place ask you, what authority you had for offering me such an uncommon, and unwarrantable insult, which you certainly must allow you have, and that without assigning any specific cause for so doing.

I am not able by any means to find out, nor am I willing to allow, that I have given you, by any of my conduct, any affront, either directly or indirectly, which can possibly justify your behaviour in committing such an enormous depredation on good manners, and the most necessary obligations which constitute society: nay, I will say further,

Your Letter is the most hostile, and most monstrous attack, ever fabricated by any person, except yourself, on a fellow creature, circumstanced as I am, in the whole world; or perhaps, on the annals of time itself.

And I am certain no man of sense, candour, truth, honesty or liberality, can for a moment be of a contrary opinion; I have

showed it to sundry of my friends, and several of your's; who think with me to the uttermost in their conclusions.

And I assure you, sir, the aggregate opinion is, that you must, most certainly, have been either intoxicated, mad, or under the influence of Lucifer, when you took your pen to disgrace yourself; and your profession in such an unhandsome, unjust, untrue, and unaccountable way; and I do give you notice, that except you immediately make a suitable apology for having done so, I will certainly expose you as you deserve. I do not mean here to enter into any investigation or comment on the unmannerly, absurd, and illiterate contents of your epistle, but shall reserve that to a future time; when it shall, God willing, be done in a proper and formal manner, and I trust more to the honour of both God and man, than the example alluded to.

And you may take it for granted that I will not make my God, should he be a demi-god; into a common stalking horse, to my pride, and virulence of ill temper, as you do on all occasions; nor do I mean to skip about the scriptures like a cunning player on an instrument, or a Nimrod, to make God's word into weapons of scurrility; nor the abettors of a base and malicious spirit, in strewing firebrands of calumny and discord, as you are so very apt to do, both in and out of your pulpit. I have ordered your Letter to be printed verbatim as it stands, and as you have challenged me, to become your antagonist, I cannot desist, therefore mean to print and publish my answer; and you may depend on candour, truth, honesty, as you say, and a sacred attention to God's word: and I subscribe myself; a past, a present, and a future friend and lover of Joseph your steward, but never was, nor am, nor will be to King Pharaoh; and an admirer of truth.

J. BRAMAH.

Piccadilly, Wednesday,
13th Nov. 1793.

[The following Letter was enclosed in the above.]

Piccadilly, 16th Nov. 1793, MR. HUNTINGTON,

HE that judgeth in a matter before he heareth it cannot be wise, therefore the Lord judge between thee and me; and the Lord avenge me of thee.

Wherefore dost thou devise mischief against thy brother, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee?

If I have done thee any wrong, let me be heard in the presence of two witnesses, that every word may be established.

Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying Behold David seeketh thy hurt?

Wherefore doth my Lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is there in mine hand?

Now therefore, hear the words of thy servant; If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, Cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day, from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, go serve other Gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the King of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

I have said in my heart, when Mr. Huntington's great swelling words reached me, that I must certainly perish one day or other by the hands of this great man; but I was soon revived by a still small voice, saying, fear not, for as the Lo 2000 rd liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish.

The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against thee, as thou hast done against me without a cause.

Thou hast driven me from the habitations of peace, by rewarding me evil for my good, and for this wickedness I pray God thou mayest not have dimness of sight in thy latter end.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;

Which imagine mischiefs in their hearts; continually are they gathered together for war. The proud have laid a snare for me, and cords: but grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not his wicked devices; and let the mischief of his own lips cover him.

Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

Mr. Huntington, it is an easy matter for a man to be clean in his own eyesight; but remember the Lord weigheth the spirits. And also that every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to him that seeth in secret. And although hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

It is by mercy and truth that iniquity is purged, and not by flouncing about, and bolting out high sentences, which are by no means to the point in hand; for my own part, I wish first to understand and practise small things before I climb up to your height: and as you say about a bridle in the jaws, I wish that my mouth may always be kept in with a bit, that I may not offend with my tongue, rather than give that very mischievous member the liberty you too frequently do. You know, sir, that a divine sentence must always be in the mouth of a king, and

when so, his mouth transgresseth not in judgment. The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out; and the lips of the righteous knoweth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

It is not, sir, your skipping about the bible for high words, about the divine He, the eternal Jehovah, and the like stuff; which will not at all convince me of the reality of your being one whom God has chosen to be his minister, nor even that you in any wise understand, in the smallest degree, those very mysterious but necessary points of Christianity, but should it be even in the affirmative, there is no room on that account for boasting, for what hast thou even then which thou hast not received? and if received, why boast as though thou hadst not received? who made thee to differ?

I know that fools' bolts are always ready, and soon shot, and his wrath is presently known, but a prudent man covereth shame.

Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the very heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. People who would convince others that they are right in matters where revelation has left room for doubt, should always be careful to confirm, by practice in their own conduct, the principles they inculcate to others in theory: for I never could believe for my own part, that the golden pipes which convey the golden oil from the olive branch could properly be made the common drains of a dunghill, nor the loathsome spout of peevish rancour, persecution, and raillery, which I am extremely sorry to say, is too often the features of your pulpit. Does the Holy Ghost direct both blessing and cursing in one breath? No, says James, these things certainly ought not so to be: all the

vessels of the sanctuary should be holy; and when these bursts of calumny and streams of petulance, and dregs of an unhallowed mind, do break loose, I think then is the time for a bridle to be put in the jaws.

It certainly never can be seemly for a teacher of the eternal word, and minister of the true sanctuary, to adopt a line of deportment in his pulpit, which would be a disgrace to him in his ordinary functions of life out doors.

I have ever thought it the duty of a shepherd of God's fold, to be feeding his own flock, and that with knowledge and understanding. And to be building up a people, such as God would accept, and such as with whom he himself would wish to spend an eternity with, when the strife of this vain world will be no more.

If this is your case, well, if not, God send it may be.

I remain, yours &c.

J. BRAMAH.

To Mr. BRAMAH.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind epistle, in which you inform me that my letter to you is to be printed, with a suitable answer. I take the earliest opportunity of informing you that my letter is already in the printer's hands; which, with your answer, shall be printed at my own expense, and sent to you free of all charges.

W. H.

Paddington,
17th Nov. 1793.

To MR. HUNTINGTON.

Fellow Servants, or Brethren in Egypt,

IF Joseph is at home, pray let him read the contents of the enclosed to King Pharaoh; but if not, let it wait unread, till he, if he be yet alive in Egypt, return.

I am your's in peace and love

Brother LEVI.

Canaan, just returned from Babel's captivity. Liberty the first year of.

[The following was enclosed in the above.]

God is love, Christ is peace, to be quarrelsome is none of the spots of God's children.

Piccadilly, 17th Nov. 1793,

SIR,

I WAS duly honoured last night with your answer to my Letter; and I humbly thank you for your early attention to it. I assure you, kind sir, this is a mark of regard or of favour, I could not have by any means expected, much less merited from so great a man as Mr. Huntington.

But I am rather of opinion that this indulgence was more my chance than my fate; and that I am more indebted to Joseph the steward, than great King Pharaoh, for such kindness.

I confess, I expected that when Jehudi, or Jehu had read the roll, that the penknife and the fire would have been its fate, as it was with that of poor Jeremiah's. However, the king's fire on the hearth perhaps was not burning, or his knife not in his hand: but be this as it may, my letter has escaped the doom of many which has lately been received by this great king; this is known by his honest confession. Thus far, sir, I humbly thank you for this kind preference.

You inform me in the first place that you have ordered the letter, sent to me, to be printed: this is fully as wise a step, and will undoubtedly be as much to your credit as it was to write such a letter to a person you know so little of.

You are also extremely judicious in making yourself the plaintiff as it is always best so in a bad cause; but remember, sir, that in all courts of law, and more especially in equity, it is required, not only to make your declaration, but you must also state your case, produce your evidence, and prove your facts, or the facts you have complained of in such declaration: this, honest sir, I give you by way of friendly hint, or a caution that you may be on your guard, and not give direction to your printer to publish your own shame. For consider, sir, great things will certainly be expected from a person in your eminent situation, much more just things; and as I mean to do you all possible justice, both I, and the court in which this cause will appear, will no doubt expect the same, before you will be entitled to a verdict.

You are like most men who are fond of lawsuits and sending challenges, always conclude you shall come off victorious; but pray, good sir, be not too hasty in these matters, for your trial is not yet before the court of men, although it is before the court of heaven, which court is that to which I have made my appeal in this matter.

If your printer is your friend and an honest man, he will advise you as I have done, first to state, then to prove, and then direct him to publish to the world and to God, what were the real reasons or facts, on which you ground the accusations in your infamous letter o 2000 f date. I think, sir, it would have been well for you, if you had sent me a sheet of paper all blank, rather than what you did send.

I am, Sir,
still your well-wisher,
J. BRAMAH.

P. S. You acquainted me likewise that you will answer all my letters if I write 10000. I pray sir, let these answers be such as will not wound God's cause, and disgrace you as your first has done; and I tell you again you had better feed your flock with the bread of life.

You say also, that you are not ashamed of your gospel; nor yet a shame to it: you did well in calling it your gospel, for I am certain was it the gospel of God, of peace, or of Christ, it would be much ashamed of this your conduct, and reprove you for it. I say again as a friend, be cautious what you both write and print, for your own, and God's sake, as you have not a novice to do with.

To MR. BRAMAH.

SIR,

I HAVE received your extraordinary answer to my extraordinary letter. As to the date and place being omitted in mine, is of no consequence; my name is enough, with the contents of the letter, to convince Mr. Bramah who sent it.

You have long heard me in public insist that that ever blessed Immanuel, who manifested himself to me, and brought life and immortality to light in my soul, is, from everlasting to everlasting, God, in every sense of that great and terrible word, or name; which glorious doctrine, by God's help, I hope ever to defend to the utmost of my abilities.

You ask by what authority I have given you such an unwarrantable insult.

I have, sir, a commission to write in defence of truth; and if that be an insult, my authority and warrant are, First, from my Divine Master; Secondly, from the scriptures of truth; Thirdly, from the laws of my country, which give me a toleration; and Fourthly, from the articles of the national church, to which I subscribed. All these authorize me to contend for the faith of the saints to defend truth, and to stop the mouth of a gain-

As for such a Saviour as the Arians and Socinians talk about, I know nothing of. There is no such Messiah in heaven, nor yet in the bible; nor did any of the prophets ever preach such an one; nor did any of the righteous Jews ever expect such an one to come. The glorious God that appeared to Adam in Eden, to Abraham on the plains of Mamre, to Jacob at Bethel, to Moses in the bush, and to Isaiah on his throne, appeared to me also, as the searcher of hearts and trier of reins; and gave me the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of my sins. This ever blessed God and Saviour we know; but, as for all other saviours talked of by Arians and Socinians, we know not whence they be; nor do we believe that they have, or ever had, any existence but in the heads of unconverted men.

You have given me, sir, no personal affront. I know nothing of your character or conduct in life; and, as you stand not in church fellowship with us, I have nothing to do with these things. But, as you have twice mentioned a desire to join us in church fellowship, I was very observant, when in your

company, of your conversation; and, upon the whole, found nothing of repentance, or that savoured of humbling grace. You had plenty of words, but they were not seasoned with salt; much talk, but little to the purpose; no experience, no power; consequently I found no union, and was determined in my own mind not to receive you into church communion with us, without some better discovery of a work of grace, or what the scriptures call a reason of the hope that is in them.

While doing the work of the chapel, you insinuated that you should give something towards the alteration, and would deduct it out of the bill when paid. This I endeavoured to prevent, by discharging your bill of eighty-two pounds at the time it was sent, and by desiring my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Baker, not to receive a mite from you on that account. And for this reason; as I did not think I had ever sowed any spiritual things in your heart, I had no right to reap your carnal things. However, you afterwards called twice at Mr. Baker's, offering money; which was refused, agreeable to my desire. You then sent me a polite letter, with a draft for eight pounds enclosed; which I laid by, determining not to use it; for, as I disliked your religion, so I was resolved not to keep your money, or to lay myself under any obligation to you on that account. I therefore returned it, that you might receive damage by us in nothing.

You tell me that you have ordered my letter to be printed verbatim, which you intimate will appear to my shame. I would wish Mr. Bramah in this matter to please himself, only granting me the same liberty with his answers; which must, no doubt, do him much honour, they are so nervous, so correct, so pointed, so convincing, so establishing, so consistent, and so conclusive!

You say that, when I wrote to you, I was either intoxicated or mad, or under the influence of Lucifer. There is nothing in my letter that comes up to this evil report, nor do I believe it

contains any thing but scriptural truth. But supposing it to be the effect of madness, then pray under what influence did Mr. Bramah write the following lofty expressions in answer : It is not, sir, your skipping about the bible for high words about the divine He, the eternal Jehovah, and the like stuff, that will not at all convince me,' &c. &c. If this is stuff, the bible is full of it. Let Mr. Bramah take care how he draws out a wide mouth and sports here; this is a dangerous ground for contempt. Is my asserting that Christ is a divine person, and the eternal Jehovah, the effect of madness or intoxication? If he is not God, what is to become of Mr. Bramah? No man can redeem his brother; no man can pay to God a ransom for him; no man can quicken his own soul; nor are we to trust in an arm of flesh, or in the son of man, in whom there is no help; vain is the salvation of man. The scriptures declare that the great Redeemer, who laid down his life a ransom for many; who quickens and raises dead sinners to life; who is the object of all the saints' hope, confidence, and trust; and who is the object of angels' and of Zion's worship, is God over all and blessed for evermore.

I struck at nothing in my letter to you but what I believe to be errors against Christ. I therein insisted that he is, touching his Godhead, a divine person, and the eternal Jehovah; which in your answer you daringly and impiously call stuff: I bless my God that there is not one farthing of Mr. Bramah's money in our subscription, that I am not one farthing in his debt, and that he is not in church fellowship with us; for sure I am that that man must be in the gall of bitterness who can lightly speak evil of the Godhead of Christ.

You inform me that you shall, at some future time, investigate and comment on my letter in a proper and formal manner, and that you mean to print and publish your answer. By which formal and proper investigation you seem tacitly to confess that the letters you have already sent me are not very proper

and formal. Perhaps you may think them too improper to appear in print. However, as they are the only answers I have as yet received, I herewith present them to the public verbatim as they stand, leaving Mr. Bramah to publish my letters whenever he may please. In which I have only vindicated what I believe to be one of the greatest mysteries, and one of the greatest and most fundamental truths, in all the bible. I have not called Mr. Bramah a drunkard, a madman, nor yet 'one influenced by Lucifer'. I have not styled him a skipper about the bible, though there is a great deal of skipping in his letter; nor have I called him a cunning player, a Nimrod, a Pharaoh, a fool, or a man of a base spirit. All which epithets he has plentifully conferred upon me. And he is welcome to call me what he pleases; I shall never sue him at the law; being fully persuaded he knows not what he does, what he says, nor what he means. It is all done, I would willingly hope, in ignoranc 2000 e and in unbelief; otherwise he surely never could call the incommunicable name of the eternal Jehovah, stuff. Poor man! He makes a good patent lock, but cuts a sad figure with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. I mean the key of knowledge, or an experimental acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ; without faith in whom there is no coming to the Father.

You say that divine revelation leaves room for doubts! I always thought that divine revelation was intended to solve doubts, and that doubts about the greatest mysteries of God spring from man's ignorance, or the native blindness of his heart; and not from divine revelation. For sure I am, that if God, as Paul says, reveals his Son in a man, as he did in Paul, he will acknowledge, as Paul did, that Christ is the eternal Jehovah. Doubts, therefore, rise not from the room that divine revelation leaves; but from the blindness of the man to whom nothing has been revealed. And this Mr. Bramah will acknowledge, should God ever take the scales from his eyes. Furthermore, as the priests' lips are to preserve

knowledge, and the people are to require the law at the mouth of such [and blessed be God, London is not destitute of such, if I am not one,] he would have acted the part of an inquirer in the way to Zion, had he tried this experiment; and it would better have become him than cavilling at my doctrines, and suffering his porter to do the same. All things are possible with God; and it is possible for God to use the weakest of his servants to solve the doubts of an honest and sincere inquirer.

The many scriptures you have quoted are so full to the point in hand that they will speak for themselves; only that the title of the King of Israel is by no means applicable to me, nor did I ever think that Mr, Bramah, who tells me that I have not a novice to do with, is a flea. Nor is there any danger of his blood falling by my hands; nor do I think that God will smite me for preaching what in my conscience I believe to be truth; nor that I shall descend into the battle and perish, seeing I am not in a military capacity, and aim at nothing but setting the minds of men right with respect to the great things of God, and the worship that he requires; and to separate the chaff from the wheat, the vile from the precious, and the poor earthworm from the heaven-born soul.

What Mr. Bramah is, with respect to his character or conduct in life, as a man, a tradesman, a neighbour, a gentleman, a husband, friend, master, or subject, I know not. In all these characters he may shine as a comet for aught I know; but he appears to be as far from any resemblance to a poor penitent, or broken-hearted sinner, as Jannes, Jambres, or Alexander the coppersmith.

You say that many of my friends, to whom you have shewn my letter, judge of it as you do; and that it was written under the influence of intoxication, or of Lucifer. Be it so, I am willing to bear that weight. But I humbly hope they will not judge so uncharitably of Mr. Bramah's kind answer to it; which

expresses so high a regard to me for my work's sake. I thank you, kind sir, for all the cautions you have given me touching law, human courts, states, and proofs; especially for informing me that I have not a novice to do with; which is a thought that never entered my mind; for a novice, in scripture, is a young, green, raw, disciple of Christ; or an infant in grace, knowledge, or understanding: from all which charges I am in conscience bound to vindicate and for ever clear my friend Bramah; as I never thought him a disciple either of Christ or of Moses, nor yet instructed in any other wisdom than that of Egypt, or in the rudiments of this world, which are not after Christ, but Mammon.

You offer to give me a reason of your hope. I am fully satisfied about Mr. Bramah's religion without any such reason. In God's elect there must be an internal conversion; which will ever be attended with an external reformation, and a withering to the spirit and riches of this world; and where this inward change is wanting there can be no hope. Therefore I shall never require of Mr. Bramah such an impossible task; and, as he intimates that the gospel I preach is neither the gospel of Christ nor of peace, I think this assertion infers that I am by no means a proper person to judge of the hope he possesses and enjoys; to which I readily agree and subscribe, referring the decision to Samuel Buck.

W. H.

To MR. HUNTINGTON. SIR,

I expected that your cooler reflections, with the advice of some of the wisest of your friends, would have produced a handsome and Christian-like apology for the affront you so rashly offered me in your Letter when you returned my draft. And, I assure you, had this been the case, no man on earth would have been more ready to have forgiven what might

have been the result of hasty thought or the effect of misinformation. But I am very sorry to find, that you are so far from retracting, that you are making the rent worse by employing the choicest of your satellites in order to justify your bad behaviour, to circulate a report that I am swerved to Arian principles, &c. &c.

To this charge, sir, I know not how to plead, either guilty, or not guilty, being a total stranger to the word, and much more to the tenets of that sect, if there be such a sect. This being the case, I must beg as a particular favour that you will oblige me, previous to my entering into my defence, with a full description of the Arian system; and also your scripture authority for your very strenuous rejection of this doctrine. I will particularly thank you for this information, as it may serve to set me right, and rescue me from such a dangerous and fatal error as you seem to think it.

This, sir, as a lover of souls, I flatter myself you will readily comply with. And I must give you to understand, that I am far from judging myself capable of steering in this important course without a guide; but at the same time hope that my God will never suffer me to be led or driven out of the way of life by any false or blind one: therefore must hear your sentiments on the subject, previous to my drawing any conclusions, for the government of my future conduct.

If you wish to know on what foundation I build, as you say, I am ready to give a reason of the hope that is in me whenever you think proper to write me a letter which will admit of a pertinent answer.

But the incongruity of your present or first one, totally puts it out of my power to give you any specific answer, touching my principles of religion, notwithstanding I am, in my leisure moments, preparing, as you say, such an answer as it calls for.

And that I may be enabled in the attempt to keep under my Pharaoh is the humble prayer of your obedient servant and no enemy,

JOS. BRAMAH.

Piccadilly 27th Nov. 1793,173

To MR. BRAMAH.

SIR,

I HAVE received your very candid epistle with all its honourable proposals: but must tell you that neither scripture nor conscience will suffer me to accept of them. I find neither precept nor precedent to authorise or compel a servant of Christ to apologize for preaching against a damnable heresy, or for rebuking a scorner in his chair, even though he should get to himself a blot by so doing. He that has God's word must speak it faithfully; "What is the chaff to the wheat?" Yea, he must take forth the vile from the precious, or he cannot be as God's mouth, nor speak as his oracles. Neither the wisest counsels nor the coolest reflections are to bring the righteous to fall down before the wicked. This, saith the wise man, is a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring, Prov.

Your demand, of a handsome and Christian-like apology for sending back your draft, appears to me unreasonable. Every man is at liberty to receive or to refuse a present when offered, especially a believer in Christ, who is taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Besides, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination, how much 2000 more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" Abraham made no apology to the king for refusing the spoils of Sodom. He did it to cut off occasion from him that sought occasion, that he might not say, I have made Abraham rich. Nor did Peter make an apology to Simon Magus for refusing his kind offer; for Peter

well knew what Gehazi got by making a penny of his master's miracles. That no man upon earth is more ready to forgive than Mr. Bramah, is an assertion I can by no means disprove, though I am too slow of heart to believe one word of it. Besides, sir, I crave no forgiveness, knowing that God has put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: between the children of the flesh and the children of God. Nor did Christ come to send peace here, but rather division; yea, a sword and a fire; and what will he do in the end, if it be already kindled? The sinner that God chooses out of the world is to be hated of the world; yea, hated of all men for the Lord's sake. Here can be no real love, no real fellowship, nor union, between these parties. Where God has put enmity, who can make reconciliation? and where he has declared war, who can make peace? It is a truth, found both in scripture and experience, that "an unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked."

I cannot, without deceit, say that I condole you in your third assertion: that you are very sorry to find me so far from retracting, that I am making the rent worse, by employing the choicest of my satellites, in order to justify my bad behaviour. As for retracting, I believe there is not one word contrary to the scriptures in all my letter, therefore I cannot retract, nor act so base a part as to betray the Lord's flock into the hands of a wolf, or into the grin or gin of a lie.

You tell me, in your former epistle, that the contents of my letter are absurd and illiterate; which I cannot deny; especially when I have to deal with so learned, so wise, and so judicious a penman. For what you can mean by making the rent worse, where there never was either union, harmony, or friendship, I cannot understand. But that which puzzles my best judgment, confounds all my senses, and at once destroys all my vain notions of human learning, is to know what you mean by my

employing my choicest satellites in order to justify my bad behaviour. I have heard that there are four little diminutive stars, called satellites, which always attend the planet Jupiter in his wonderful revolutions; and that there are five satellites, which revolve in consort round the planet Saturn in the same manner. But then this knowledge is too high and too wonderful for me. I have no life guards, no stars, nor the brilliant attendants of planets, in my service, nor to be employed by me. God has made every thing beautiful in its season; and every thing shines brightest when it moves in its own sphere, and in its own order. God made the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars to rule the night; and he makes choice of the foolish among men to confound the wise; and I believe the foolish of this world, and not a star, sufficient, under God, to entangle the wise in his own craftiness, and to bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent; especially such as Mr. Bramah, who, it is to be feared, is wise above what is written.

But you charge me with making choice of my satellites to circulate a report that you are swerved to Arian principles. God forbid that I should ever presume or attempt to command or employ the attendance either of Jupiter or Saturn in any such business. And so far am I from charging Mr. Bramah with swerving from any religious principle, that I never perceived, when in his company, nor did I ever hear by report, nor did the thought or idea ever enter my mind, that one real religious sentiment, notion, opinion, Or principle, ever inhabited either the thought, head, or heart of Mr. Bramah, since he has been in this world. And on this account, sir, I charged my invaluable and, ever-beloved friends, Mr. and Mrs. Baker, never to take a mite of you towards the expense of the alteration of the chapel, even should you offer fifty pounds. Therefore let not Mr. Bramah impute this iniquity, of circulating a report that he has changed his religious principles, to me, as I never conceived that he possessed any

such thing. I therefore utterly deny this charge. But this assertion of mine you frankly acknowledge, for you tell me that to this charge you know not whether to plead guilty or not guilty, being a total stranger to the word, and much more to the tenets of this sect. This honest confession, sir, I really believe; and shall never attempt to refute it. That you are an utter stranger to Arianism, Socinianism, and Sabellianism, I doubt not; and so are all who hold such tenets; and so I think you are to an application, to an unctuous experience, to a clear view, to the divine power, to the happy enjoyment, and to the actuating influence and sin-subduing energy, of every truth of the everlasting gospel.

But to comply with your request, that I should give you a particular description of the Arian system, and also my scripture authority for so strenuously rejecting that doctrine, is what divine revelation lays me under no obligation to do. I shall leave the devil to do his own drudgery, unless you choose to assist him. If Mr. Bramah would know the depths of Satan, he must go to the minister of Satan, false doctrines are to be had of false prophets: besides, he is acquainted, I have been informed, with a certain prophet of the grove, who, it seems, has predicted a millennium that is to commence in three years, and such a millennium as never had, nor will have, any existence but in his brains. To the venerable Samuel Buck I would recommend friend Bramah; for he must be deeply skilled, or he would not be able to ridicule almost every doctrine I have advanced.

As to rescuing Mr. Bramah from error, it is a work not to be effected by me. If God gives a man up to a strong delusion, there is no rescuing him. God shuts up a man, and there can be no opening. Nor can I indulge the least hope of that man's salvation who can trifle with any of the glorious persons of the ever adorable Trinity, or call such things, stuff. Such must be carnal men indeed, having not the Spirit; knowing nothing but

what they know naturally, and therefore speak evil of the things they understand not. Natural men, and men of the world, can know nothing savingly of any one of these three persons. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." And the Saviour declares that the world sees him no more, but the saints see him, and because he lives they shall live also. And of the Holy Ghost, the world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but the saints know him, for he dwelleth with them and shall be in them. I must beg of Mr. Bramah not to call these things, stuff, as he has in a former letter. Men of the world, who are buried in it, and who are heaping up a portion in this life, can know nothing experimentally of God. If a man loves the world, or the things of the world, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Is not the friendship of this world enmity with God? He that is a friend of the world is the enemy of God. There is no serving God and mammon. They that will be rich fall into divers temptations; into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Vital godliness, and an insatiable thirst for worldly riches, never can dwell together in one heart; for where a man's treasure is there will his heart be also. Can he have his heart in heaven, and his treasure among the true riches there, who is scraping so many thousands together here? "What shall it profit a man, could he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" A man who is immensely rich, and still labouring after more; a man who thus loads himself with thick clay; is an Arian in every sense; for though he profess to know God, yet by his worldlymindedness he denies him. Christ has been declared, and the scriptures cannot be broken, that, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." When salvation comes with power to a sinner's heart, as it did to Zaccheus, the love of money is cast out, and he is taught to covet earnestly the best gifts, and be contented with food and raiment. But perhaps friend Bramah

overlooks these scriptures now, which on a death-bed he may more perfectly consider.

You tell me you are preparing such an answer to my letter as it calls for. You are welcome, sir, to prepare and publish what you please concerning me. I shall take no offence at it. When it is seen that Mr. Bramah is redeemed from among men; when he is chosen out of the world, and separated from it; when he ceases to be actuated and influenced by the spirit of it; when he is crucified to it, and that to him; then, but never till then, will it appear that the grace of God reigns in him. May God grant that this may be the case. Amen.

W. H.

Church street, Paddington,
10 Dec. 1793.

P. S. If you publish 10,000 letters, I will answer them, if God permit.

The Mystery of Godliness Letters

In a Letter to an Erroneous Man

William Huntington (1745-1813)

WRITTEN FOR THE COMFORT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE CONGREGATIONS AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL AND
MONKWELL STREET MEETING.

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. ñ I
Tim. iii. 16.*

*Also of your selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things
to draw disciples after them.ñActs xx. 80.*

TO MR. BENSLEY, PRINTER, BOLT-COURT, FLEET-
STREET

Dear Brother in the Lord, and Dear Tom in the Flesh,

As I have hitherto proved you, and, upon proof, have found you to be the most careful, the most desirous of giving satisfaction, the most attentive to your employers; and whose works have been sent in properly dried, and better packed up; and the numbers ordered, and time of sending them, better observed, and more punctually fulfilled, than by any printer I ever yet employed; I do, in this confidence, dear Tom, send you these papers; beseeching you, for the Lord's sake, to send them out verbatim as they come from me.

I am driven, by an ungodly man, into a controversy about things which are heavier to me than a talent of lead, and more

fit for an archangel than a self-despairing sinner, who has neither learning, nor abilities; "but by the grace of God I am what am;" and, as the Lord has made me a shepherd, I must defend the lambs of the flock against every wolf in sheeps clothing. I think I have made Truth both my shield and buckler; and 2000 under her protection I need fear no danger, as we are commanded to be valiant for truth. If you see any thing in these papers that may in any sense sully her glory, or obscure her lustre, bring your objections to me, and let them be weighed in an even balance. I am conscious of my own inability ; but dare not quit the standard of Christ, when his word is so boldly attacked-by so obstinate, so imperious, so daring, so hardened, so insensible, so confused, so bewitched, and so presumptuous a rebel. The man is, I think, a native of Maidstone in Kent, and (to my grief I speak it) a member with us; though it was with the greatest difficulty he got in among us, for I was fully persuaded that the person who was his supposed father knew nothing savingly of God. And this affair, as well as many others, has served to establish the sentiment that has ever stuck by me, namely, that no man can communicate to others what he never had himself; or, in other words, that a child of the flesh cannot communicate to others the Spirit of God ; or a bond-child be instrumental in setting another at liberty, seeing, the scripture declares it is-like people, like priest; and so with respect to congregations also; as is the mother, so is her daughter. I am informed there are a few that belong to us, who are leavened with the wild ferment of this awful and dangerous man; and, as you are one in union with the family, I wish you would endeavour to find them out, that we may purge ourselves from this old leaven, and be a new lump. For my part, I hope never to be slack in this business, which is so strictly enjoined by the Lord himself, and so incumbent upon us all. We have long, endeavoured to keep the gate into the fold as strait as possible, and many have complained of its being, too strait: but this awful and wretched man shews us that it is by far too wide yet; which I

hope will be an instructing lesson to us all. He had the countenance of Cain when he came to us; which was the cause of our criticizing, him so closely, and receiving him so reluctantly: but Satan had well furnished him, and deeply counselled him. And by this means that enemy of God props up his tottering interest in the world ; who, notwithstanding, all his efforts, shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

I cannot help thinking but the craftiness of this wretched man was exhibited to me a few months ago in a dream. One Saturday night I dreamed that I was in a *barn floor*, where there lay some *wheat*, some *chaf*, and some *straw*; which I was particularly remarking, when on a sudden I saw a *wolf*, of a tabby colour, come softly into the floor, and creep under a little heap of straw; and soon after there came two more; and so on, till seven in all took the same shelter; but, as there was not much straw in the floor, they were obliged to get one upon another; but neither of them could so cover himself as to be entirely hid. I particularly observed how they all had placed themselves; and, recollecting that I had an old musket in the barn ready charged, I took hold of it, and attempted so to take my aim as to hit or wound three of them, even if I killed none. But my gun missed fire; which induced me to take another method which was to take my gun by its butt end, and with the barrel to smite across the loins of three of them, and by so doing render them, incapable of taking, their hinder parts with them, consequently rendering them unable to defend themselves or run away; which I accordingly did, and wounded all three; but I awaked myself by the violent swing of my arms.

This dream lately came fresh to my mind, and I have no doubt out it is now in part fulfilled. I believe the *barn floor* to represent the *church of God*, to which it is compared; the heap of *wheat* to represent *God's elect*; who are called wheat gathered into the barn, Matt. xiii. 30. The *chaff* I construed to

be *light, graceless professors*,, Matt. iii. 12. The *straw* I took to be *false doctrines*, I Cor. iii. 10. And the *wolves, erroneous men*, who get into the floor, or into the churches, on purpose to injure the godly, who are hid under the straw of false doctrine, making lies their refuge, as the scriptures witness; "For I know," said Paul, "that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," Acts, xx. 29, 30. But the straw was not sufficient to hide any one of the wolves. And it appears that many of the gracious see through the deception of this new deceiver, through a few are under the straw with him. My gun missing fire convinced me that all the truth, that has been discharged from the pulpit, has been ineffectual to convince him of his error: but, as the last effort wounded three of them, it gave me some encouragement to take my pen in hand; and, if this will not do, we must handle Paul's rod.

I shall beg no excuse for troubling you with dreams, because I have my warrant for so doing: "He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream.'

Dear Tom, grace be with thee. My kind respects to your dame, the old disciple with whom you lodge; not forgetting the little family of Arminians, whom I love for your sake, though I am no friend to their principles. Believe me to be, in the Lord Jesus, ever yours,

W. HUNTINGTON.

Church-street, Paddington, 3 January, 1794.

TO MR. BERRY, PERFUMER, GREEK-STREET, SOHO.

Walworth, Saturday Evening, May 11, 1793.

My Dear Friend,

I RECEIVED yours; and would directly have answered it, but find myself exceeding busy; partly owing to my intended journey into the North, and partly owing to our purposed removal into the Borough High-street at Midsummer. However, I feel myself inclined to comply, as far as I can, with your request, as a small acknowledgment of your unlimited kindness to me.

That you have found me faithful, my dear Friend, is owing to my having, first obtained mercy. And indeed the grace of God, I can truly say, has been abundant toward me; for I have felt, and do feel to the present day, when left without the Saviour's sensible presence, that my heart is nothing but a mass and sink of corruption; but, when he is pleased to come into his garden, he causes a sweet moving of the affections towards himself; 'tis then that joy and praise spring up, "thanksgiving and the voice of melody. "And indeed, my dear Friend, the happiest, sweetest moments that I enjoy, are when the Lord is pleased to bless me with a view of the journey's end, and the thoughts that by and by I shall be for ever with him. O happy state! O unspeakably blest abode! where no wretched *old man* shall ever come; no, not a limb or member of him; but Jesus and we shall live and reign to all eternity together. But here my pen has run with my heart a little; pray excuse me.

Respecting Mr. Loud; as you request me, I will be as explicit as the limits of time and paper will allow me to be. I think I have known him about seven years, and within the two last with some degree of intimacy; from which time (for reasons I shall presently give you) I have studiously avoided any intercourse with him. When I first became acquainted with him, I was led to look upon him not only as a godly man, but a man of singular abilities, gifts, and grace; and indeed have often looked upon myself as many degrees below him: but the Lord hath said, The first shall be last and the last first. He had a particular turn for much reading, and study, which made him

pass with me for a while as a man of profound wisdom; but now I greatly fear that his reading and study were only on speculation, rather than for godly edification. The first doctrinal defect that I ever discovered in him was, by his bringing, one of Winchester's books to our house, in Princes-street, about five years ago; which, when Mr. W. and I had read and condemned, he attempted to justify; not roundly, out by saying there were many things in it unanswerable, &c. Being pretty smartly talked to about it, he soon relinquished his client, at least to all appearance. However, this was left as a witness in the court against him; and, though silent then, by a professed change in Loud's mind, yet allowed to speak on any future occasion.

The next was respecting the moral law as a believer's rule of life and action, which he at first denied; but about two years and a half ago changed his mind, and began to dispute almost incessantly for it; and, being, frequently opposed, he got worse and worse upon it, abusing, and speaking, evil of Mr. Huntington, and of all that hear him. From that time I began a little to watch him, and have continued to do so to this day. He would, for him or two Sundays together, go to Tottenham-court, and perhaps on a third to Providence; when I observed that he was, at least, nine times out of ten asleep during the whole time of worship. This I charged upon him about two years ago, when I disputed with him about the law, for, I believe, two hours; and, though in fact I stopped his mouth, yet his stubborn spirit could not bend. Soon after this he was severely afflicted with a putrid fever, as was his wife also, and I think two of his children. I must confess it gave me some degree of pleasure when this heavy trial came upon him; not to see or bear barely of the miseries of a fellow creature; but, as I knew him to be employed in fighting against the truth, I hoped the Lord would by that means have purged out the rebellion of his heart; but I am sorry to say he came out, as the wise man says, like a fool brayed in a mortar. He did not,

indeed, belch out, as he had done, against the Providence connexion, because a few of that dear community had supported him in his late distress; yet (the Lord knows my heart) I have sometimes thought, when I have met him, that he looked with a fallen countenance, and like a man with a conscious roguish principle about him, among a few honest, simple souls, that he found he could not injure.

It was not long after this when our dear friend Gilbert told me he had broached a strange new doctrine respecting the person of the Mediator; affirming that he was not God and man, of two distinct natures; but that the Word, the second person, was made flesh, or that the Godhead was converted into manhood in the womb of the virgin; and that, if he had seen Jesus Christ with his bodily eyes, he should with the same eyes have seen, in that very body, the true essence of God. About five months ago he called at King-street on some business; when we took occasion to ask him about this new thing, and disputed for some time. He then insisted upon it that, if the Saviour really partook of the seed of the virgin, he was a sinner; and that his death and sacrifice had no more merit in it than if he (Loud) himself should die a martyr. He said he believed that Christ partook no more of the seed of the woman than his handkerchief (at the same time drawing a pocket handkerchief through his fingers); or than a funnel partook of wine, or any other liquor that passed through it. The idea that God could not suffer, he said, was only a common, handed-down, made-up expression, without any scriptural ground for it. We proposed many scriptures to him, which he could not answer; but, as he remained quite obstinate, we told him that the error seemed to be almost, if not altogether, damnable, and that he certainly was in an awful state. However, he professed himself to be very comfortable, and said it was a very wholesome doctrine, and that he got it on his knees.

These are some of the many wicked things he advanced. I have also heard that there are some who are deceived by him, and have embraced his wicked doctrines. I think, my dear friend, if you was to take a person or two with you, and call at his house, you would be an eye and ear witness to what I have said. My paper forbids me to proceed; must therefore conclude with kind respects to Mrs. Berry. Your affectionate friend, and brother in our dear dear Lord.

Peter Reed

TO MR. HAMILTON.

Friend,

As you have desired my judgement in writing of the person of the Saviour of poor lost sinners, &c. it is thus:ñ

First, That he is the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, by inconceivable Generation.

Secondly, That this Son, called the Word, who was with God and was God, was, in the fullness of time, made flesh; or a man in likeness of sinful flesh, in fashion as a man, and was born of a virgin.

Thirdly, That this Son of God, (one in essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost) being born a man child, the son of man, was anointed with the fullness of the Holy Ghost, and did grow up to manhood, obeying the law of God perfectly through life; endured temptation, poverty, &c. in behalf of those for whom he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.

Fourthly, That this God Man, having been upholden by his Almighty Father till he had set judgement in the earth, the sword of justice awoke against him; he was left alone, and

failed, expired, or resigned his life, under the stroke, a ransom for many.

Fifthly, That this man Christ Jesus, consisting of body and soul, very God, having shed his blood, and laid down his life, his body was laid in the grave, and his soul descended into hell, under the sentence of death and fierce wrath of God. and there abode until the third day, when his Father (having received the last mite of payment at his hands) justified him in the Spirit, and loosed the pains of death.

Sixthly, That he (God) being thus freed from the heavy debt, came forth from the prison of hell, and quickened and took up his body, and the life he laid down (his Father also concurring), together with all power in heaven and earth.

Seventhly, That this God, after some days, ascended, body and soul, and was received up into glory, and sat down at the right hand of his Father; where he, who was dead, but is now alive, ever liveth to make intercession, &c.

Eighthly, That that very body and soul, Jesus, God himself, the true God and eternal life, will again descend to judge the quick and dead.

So that he which was conceived in the womb, born of the virgin, lived, died, &c. &c. was God, wholly God, and nothing but God, as touching his nature or essence.

So I believe, and therefore have I spoken.

T. Loud.

TO MR. LOUD

My dear Sir,

HAVING seen two letters concerning you, and the doctrines you hold, which are not true, and things which you neither acknowledged nor confessed when you joined us, I should be glad if you would call at my house next Monday or Tuesday morning, as it is my duty to admonish you; and, if you and I cannot settle matters, we will have a vestry meeting. Think soberly, and be not too hasty in writing in a wanton, trifling way. Divine things are dangerous things to play with.

Yours in Christ very affectionately,

W. HUNTINGTON.

Church-street, Paddington, Dec. 20, 1793.

TO T. LOUD, AT MR. LONGMAN'S, MUSICAL INSTRUMENT-MAKER, TOTTENHAM-COURT-ROAD.

Sir,

THERE are some things in your creed repugnant to the word of God; and, as you seem to be assiduous in circulating them, and very obstinate and immovable in them, I am constrained to set truth against them, that the gracious may see you and shun you. I know there must be heresies in the churches, that the contrary part may be made manifest; and that those which are not of God may be discovered, and go out, or be put out, from among them that are of God: and I much fear that this is your case; and perhaps in some future period you may find it so to your sorrow. You are gazing through the bounds, and stumbling upon the dark mountains, where thousands have mounted the scorn's chair, and at last have been drowned in destruction and perdition. You positively asserting, and obstinately insisting, when at my house, that the Godhead of Christ was changed into real flesh and blood; that his Godhead, thus changed, died upon the cross; and that the soul of Christ descended into hell, and lay there three

days and three nights; appear to me to be contrary to the scriptures of truth. And indeed I think you perverted every scriptural text that you quoted, As to your insisting that the children of God are under the law as a rule of life, I wonder not at; for you never was delivered from the law. This appears plain by your pride and obstinacy; for the law does not exclude boasting. And your having the old vail still upon your heart is another proof that you are not got from that mount. Your blindness and ignorance in the above things demonstrates it, as well as your countenance. Indeed I never liked your religion in my heart, from the first account I had of it; and it was not without difficulty that you got in among us. But you told me, when at my house, that you knew not then what you believed, nor do you know what you believe now. You are more wise in your own conceit, but I think far more ignorant, and farther from the truth, now, than ever you have been yet. But to proceed to these points in hand.

"The word was made flesh." This is true, but not in the sense you hold it The Godhead was not changed into flesh and blood. This is conversion, not union; it is converting one nature into another; not uniting two distinct natures together, so as to become one person. Changing one substance into another is transubstantiation, not incarnation. Such a change of nature differs much from that of a divine person assuming, or taking, human nature into union with himself The first of these is an error, the latter is a gospel truth. This union, being ordained in the ancient settlements of eternity, took place in the virgin's womb, not after the human nature was formed, nor yet after it was born; for this would have been joining, or uniting, two persons together, instead of uniting two natures in one person. The Holy Spirit, who moved upon the face of the waters at the creation of the world, and separated the light from the darkness; who gathered the waters into seas, and made the dry land appear; who garnished the heavens, and spread the face of the earth with all its verdant herbage and

vegetation, had a hand in this mysterious, this wonderful conception. Hence the angel's answer to the virgin's modest inquiry "How shall this be?" &c. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Under which Almighty power and prolific overshadowing, the seed passed from the loins to the womb. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb," said the angel, &c. In which the wonderful conception and mystic union took place between the person of the Son of God and the virgin's seed. "He was made" (touching his humanity) "of a woman." He was the woman's seed, made of the substance of her body. And this human nature was so wonderfully prepared by Jehovah, as that it should not be in the least tainted with original sin, nor with one sinful infirmity; that it might be entirely pure, and as proper as possible to be in union with so great a person; and that Adam, in innocence, might be a figure of him that was to come. On which account, though born of a woman, he is called a holy thing. Who can bring, a clean thing, out of an unclean? I answer, man cannot. But the angel told Mary that with God nothing should be impossible, therefore God can do it, and God has done it, "A body hast thou prepared me."

Furthermore, the *human nature* of Christ never did exist of itself, nor by itself; hence it is called a holy thing, not a person, because it never had any existence but in union with the *Eternal Word*; which union took place in the virgin's womb; and which union never was, nor ever will be, dissolved. Moreover, this assumption of human nature, and union with it, made no chance or alteration in the Lord's divinity. He was God from everlasting, before this union took place, and no less than God with us after it took place; and by this union he became what he never was before, God incarnate, or "God manifest in the flesh;" which manifestation was in these last times for us, and never before.

The words, "made flesh," do not signify a converting or changing one nature into another. When we hear of persons being created Peers, made Earls, or Lords, or made Chancellor, or Lord of the Household, we understand no such change by it; but that titles of honour are thereby conferred, and persons appointed to, and invested with, such or such an office. And, when we read that "the word was made flesh," it means he was invested with human nature - "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." And, when it is said "God hath made Jesus both Lord and Christ," it means the appointment of God. It was the decree of God to join the Son's Godhead to manhood, to which the Son agreed. The Father was to prepare the body, which the Son assumed in nature, and in which he was to do the will of God, which was his heart's delight; and in which nature he was made a middle person, and made or appointed King and Mediator. When it is said that the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit he neither understand a change, nor yet a creation, by it: but that the Lord from heaven, who is an uncreated Spirit, was appointed and sent to assume human nature, and in it to quicken dead sinners, or "to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him."

Mr. Loud must learn to distinguish between the body prepared, and he that came to do the will of God in it; between the vesture dipped in blood, and the word that wore it; between the gift, and the altar that sanctified the gift; between the tabernacle that God pitched, and the Shekina that tabernacled in it; between the veil (that is to say, his flesh), and the anchorage of hope within the veil; between God, and the flesh in which God was manifested; between the throne of grace (which is the human nature, Isa. xxii. 22, 23) and he that fills the throne, who is the first and the last, the Almighty; between the temple of his body, and he that raised it up in three days; between the virgin's substance, and the everlasting, Father; between the body, and all the fullness of

the Godhead that dwells bodily in it; between the manhood, which grew in wisdom and in stature, and infinite wisdom, and immensity itself, to whose wisdom there can be no addition, and to whose stature nothing can be added; between the Son, who knew not the day of Jerusalem's destruction, Mark, xiii. 22, and the omniscient God, who can be ignorant of nothing. Until Mr. Loud can learn to distinguish a little better, he will never appear wise to salvation, though he may be wise above what is written, and too wise in his own conceit to become a fool that he may be wise indeed. God will stain the pride of all vain glory, he will hide his mysteries from the wise and prudent; and, as he takes the wise in their own craftiness, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; for he that thinketh he knoweth any thing (of these things) knows nothing, yet as he ought to know-for who is sufficient for these things, where a slip of the pen or tongue might lay a foundation for destructive heresies? But our sufficiency here must be of God, and our wisdom from the Father of lights, as it is only in his light that we see light. But Mr. Loud objected to my asserting that Emmanuel, God with us, signifies God in our nature; because, as he observed, the text says, God *with* us, not *in* us; much less God in our nature. These curious quibbles may serve to stumble the weak, and to entangle himself in the labyrinth of error; but he will never be able to fix any other sense upon the word, if he pursues the safest method - I mean, that of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

The Prophet tells King Ahaz that the Lord himself shall give him a sign, a miracle, or a wonder; and such a sign as never was given before in this world. But if Emmanuel, a name that never appeared in holy writ before (and which signifies, God with us) means no more than God's presence with his people, this was no new sign, but what has been common to every saint, in every age. God was with Adam; with Abel, Seth, and Enoch, with whom he walked three hundred years; with Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses; and with

Israel always, either in the tabernacle or temple, and even in Babylon, and down to the death of Christ. "Israel hath never been forsaken of his God." In this sense *Emmanuel* can be no new sign, but a very old one, and even as old as the Word; but this mysterious sign has never been till these last days; and Jeremiah says it is a new sign, such as never was or had been before. "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man," Jer. xxxi. 22. The Prophet intimates that the creating power of God in this work is to be put forth, under which a woman is to compass a man; that is, she shall, under the over-shadowing power of the most High, compass this strange work, of bringing forth a man child, without the help of man. This Isaiah calls a *sign*,, and Jeremiah calls it a *new thing*; and such a thing as never was before - a *new thing under the sun*.

Nor can the compound word Emmanuel be construed to mean (as Mr. Loud suggested) no more than God in us; for God has dwelt in all his saints from the creation of the world-their bodies have ever been temples of the living God; as God hath said "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." It remains, therefore, that the word Emmanuel must have a meaning different from both the above; and signify "God with us" in a way that he never was before. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign," saith the prophet, "Behold a virgin shall conceive (a son) and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel," which the Apostle tell us is "God with us" The first wonder is-that a pure virgin should conceive. And the word *conceive*, or *conception*, implies that this man, that she was to compass, was to be of her seed; for, if not of her seed, how can we understand conception seeing the scriptures witness that Satan's head is to be bruised by the woman's seed; whereas Deity, abstractly considered, is the Father of all, but the seed of none. And true it is that Christ was, according to the flesh, made of a woman, of the substance of her body; and so flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. "This is a

great mystery," but it is a true one. The third part of the sign is that, after this son is conceived and born, two natures The *divine nature* is called GOD, the *human nature* expressed by the word us; which is a plain contradiction of Mr. Loud's notion-I mean that of transubstantiating the Godhead into flesh, is the papists pretend to turn the Saviour into a wafer; for this would amount to no more than *flesh* with us; whereas Emmanuel is *God* with us. And the prophet here shews when and where this union took place; namely, at the virgin's conception and in the virgin's womb; not after the infant was formed, not after it was born, as before observed; for this had been no more than a union of two persons, and is what every believer may claim who has fellowship with the Lord, seeing, such are in union with him, joined to him, and of one spirit with him. But this union took place as soon as the seed passed from the loins to the womb; Thou shalt conceive," in thy womb, said the angel; and "the word was made flesh" in the womb; that is, Christ assumed the human nature there. Hence it appears plain that a union of two natures in one person should be this wonder, this *miracle*, this glorious sin, which God would give; and which is the *good thing* promised to the house of Israel, and the *new thing* which God would create in the earth. Hence it must follow, and we may safely conclude, that Emmanuel, God with us, signifies God in human nature; "God manifest in the flesh;" or, as the scriptures witness, all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling, bodily in the human nature of Christ; and so Emmanuel, Christ, or God with us" as he never was before; and God with all his children, who were flesh and blood, and on whose account "he himself took part of the same." But *himself taking part* of the same is not a *converting himself into* the same: it is not a *change of nature*, but an *incarnation*, as Besor, one of the cities of refuge, a type of Christ, signifies. For the Saviour's union with a body prepared can never be called a change into that body. Moreover, it is a matter of doubt with me whether Deity *changed into flesh and blood* be a proper object of trust, or of

divine worship, seeing we are not to trust in an arm of flesh, nor to have any confidence in the flesh, nor to worship any but the Lord our God, But God in the tabernacle, and in the temple, was worshipped by all the Israelites, whether far off or near, wherever prayer was to be made; and God in the temple of human nature is worshipped, both in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; for, "when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him;" and of Zion it is said, "He is thy Jehovah, and worship thou him."

Your other notion of the Godhead when changed into manhood dying or expiring, on the cross, appears to me to be without any foundation in scripture, as may be gathered both out of the Old Testament and the New. Christ is the truth of all the legal types, and the substance of all those shadows; and I think the two goats, which were brought on the day of atonement, represented the two natures of Christ: one was to be offered for a sin offering, and the other to be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and then to be let go for a scapegoat into the wilderness, Levit. xvi. 9, 10. If it be objected that sinners are compared to goats, and therefore the divine nature could not be represented by them, it may be answered that sinners are also compared to lions, and yet God is compared to that noble creature more than once; moreover, the goat is enrolled in the lists of clean beasts, and the lion is not. Furthermore, the two sparrows, that were to be taken at the cleansing of the leper, appear to me to represent the same mystery. One of the birds was to be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water; the other bird, preserved alive, was to be taken, and, with cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop, to be dipped in the blood of the bird that was killed: the leper was to be sprinkled seven times with these, and to be pronounced clean, and then the living, bird was to be let go upon the face of the field, Levit. xiv. 4, 5, 6. This ceremonial cleansing by the two birds, most beautifully

prefigured our purgation by the two natures of Christ, who purged our sins by his one offering, and made an atonement for us. One bird dies; the other escapes, dipped in the blood of his fellow. So Christ in human nature died, but divinity could not; "he was put to death in the flesh," (or in the human nature, and in nothing else) "but quickened by the Spirit." If it be objected that the two sparrows prefigured, one the body and the other the soul of the Saviour, I answer that the scapegoat and the living bird both escaped unhurt and unwounded, which the soul of Christ did not, for that was by far the greatest sufferer, as every child of God will own, who has felt the wrath of God and the pains of hell, and confess, too, that the most excruciating bodily pains are nothing when compared to "a wounded spirit which, as the wise man says "who can bear?" But he allows that a man's spirit may sustain the infirmities of the body.

Furthermore, the law was ordained for man, not for Deity, God's "voice is to the sons of men," "Cursed is he" (that is, the man) "that continues not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them;" and "the soul that sinneth shall die." But neither of these awful sentences reach Divinity, or Godhead; and unless this can be proved Mr. Loud's transubstantiation can never be established. God is the one lawgiver, but himself is above all law; he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and his uncontrollable will is the only law of all the creatures that He has made, either in heaven above or in the earth beneath. Now, as the law's demands, or threatenings, are not ordained for any person in the Trinity, nor for Divinity transubstantiated into flesh and blood, so I think it will be readily granted that not Deity, nor Deity changed into manhood, is required to die in order to make restitution for man. The demands, both of law and justice, must be granted to the utmost mite - this I acknowledge: but the suffering of Deity, or the death of Divinity converted into flesh and blood, is never once to be found among, all the demands both of law

and justice: and, as this was never required or demanded, we have no reason to believe it was ever given. The utmost demand of vindictive justice is the death of the sinner, both body and soul: and the scriptures tell us that the Surety "bore our own sins in his own body on the tree," and that he made "his soul an offering for sin," "the chastisement of our peace being, upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." But Eternal Love in the abstract can never be miserable; Eternal Life can never die; Infinite Holiness is incapable of chastisement; and Immortality can never be striped. He was the Mighty God when a child born. The divinity of our Lord filled both heaven and earth when he was "put to death in the flesh." Touching his incarnation, he came down from heaven, when, as God, he was in heaven, John iii. 13. Suffice it to say that Christ was made of the seed David according to the flesh; and in no other sense is he the offspring of David. In the flesh he suffered, I Pet. iv. 1, and in the flesh he was put to death, I Pet. iii. 18, but not in divinity, for by that he raised the temple of his body in three days. David's *offspring* died, but David's root could never be conquered by death, being the Lord both of life and death. David's son was made a curse for us, but David's blessed *Lord* could never be cursed. The particular distinction which the Spirit makes between the two natures of Christ ought to be observed. When he says "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" - of the Jews, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; he suffered in the flesh, and was put to death in the flesh. These distinctions of flesh and spirit do not mean the body and soul of the Saviour, for all the human nature suffered; but the distinction respects the *Godhead and manhood* of Christ.

Let Mr. Loud soberly learn, before he gets too far in the bog, to answer the Saviour's question, "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?" And, if he answers, "the son of David," then why doth David in the spirit call him Lord? And let him learn the difference between the corn of wheat that fell into the

ground and died, and He who is the resurrection and the life, by the power of whom that grain was raised again, and all the glorious harvest that shall follow. The difference also between the Lord from heaven, and the branch from Jesse's root. The Saviour was crucified through weakness, into which Omnipotence could never be converted; and, as it was the weaker nature that went to the wall, so the weaker nature has no glory or honour, but what was given to it, or conferred on it. The Holy Ghost *kept* that nature in its place, by saying, of him, respecting his manhood, that he was made lower than the angels; calling him *the hind of the morning, the poor and needy man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yea, despised and rejected of men, a worm and no man*. And it is mentioned as a matter of astonishment that God should take notice of him as man. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The great things that are said of the *human* natures abstractedly considered, are, that God hath highly exalted him - that he hath given him glory and honour, and put all things, under his feet, and made him Lord and Christ - that he hath glorified him, and that in the same glorified body dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and into the likeness of whose glorious body all the saints shall be changed and fashioned in the great day. But, as touching his *Godhead*, the Most High can never be exalted above what he is; nor can any thing be added to the fullness of him who filleth all in all; nor can any glory be added to the God of Glory; nor any honour to infinite majesty, nor any power to him that upholds all things by the word of his own power. As *man*, he is appointed "heir of all things," and all power in heaven and earth is given to him, and all things are put under his feet. But, as *God*, "all things were made by him" - by his underived power; and all things are made for him-for his use, and for his pleasure; and to him are all things accountable, Rom. xi. 36.

The two passages of scripture, that you quoted in favour of Deity dying, by no means prove it "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," I John, iii. 16. The words *of God* are not in the original text, but supplied by the translators. It was in the flesh he suffered, and in the flesh he was put to death. But, as there were two distinct natures in the person of Christ, the humanity doubtless died in union with the Godhead; on which account the Jews are charged with killing the Prince of life, crucifying the Lord of glory, and murdering the Just one; and the church of God is said to be purchased with his own blood. All which prove the union of the two natures, even in death; and from this union springs the sweet savour of the one offering, and all the invaluable worth and glorious merit of it; because he thought it no robbery to be equal with God," even when he was God incarnate; and on which account also he is called the man Jehovah's fellow. But then it was the Godhead that laid down the life of the manhood, and it was the Godhead that took that life again. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They did destroy the temple in which the Shekina dwelt, and in three days the Shekina raised it again.

But Mr. Loud denies that the Saviour assumed the human nature; though the scriptures testify this truth so plainly, by asserting, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Heb. ii. 14. If the Lord's humanity were not in reality of the virgin's seed, but Divinity changed into flesh, he could not be said to take part of the children's flesh and blood, which the Holy Spirit says he did; and therefore we are said to be "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. And again, he was made of a woman; his humanity was of her *seed*, made of her substance; which is too plain a truth to be disproved; and none, but those who are given up to believe a lie, would 2000 ever attempt it.

Mr. Loud's insisting upon it that, if the Saviour really partook of the seed of the virgin, he was a sinner, and there could be no more merit in his sacrifice than in the martyrdom of Loud, is both shocking and dreadful. However, the angel told Mary that "with God nothing, shall be impossible;" and therefore this wonderful work was possible with God; and it was done. The Lord assumed a human nature, of which the body was prepared by God the Holy Ghost, and was a *lamb without spot, and without blemish; a holy thing; holy, harmless, and undefiled*. The Prince of this world could find nothing, of his bane in him. And this was no more impossible with God than raising, the sinful dust and ashes of the saints out of their graves, and setting them down immortal, incorruptible, glorious, and without spot or wrinkle, in the kingdom of heaven; which is a work that is to be done, and will be done.

Mr. Loud's mystery ñ of the Lord's partaking no more of the virgin's nature than a funnel does of the liquor that is poured through it-is no part of the doctrine which he says he got on his knees; for that abominable heresy of the *funnel*, or *pipe*, is many hundred years old. In short, Mr. Loud, by his abominable doctrines, denies the great mystery of godliness - the view of angels, the doctrine of the apostles, the hope of the saints, and the faith that has been in the world these seventeen hundred years. God manifested in the flesh" was, and is, the only hope of Israel; God manifest in the flesh was "seen of angels;" God manifest in the flesh was preached to the Gentiles;" God manifest in the flesh was believed on in the world;" God manifest in the flesh was "received up into glory." Hence it appears plain that the apostle's great *mystery*, Isaiah's *sign*, Jeremiah's *new thing*, and the *good thing* promised to the house of Israel, is *God incarnate*, *God manifest in the flesh*, or *God with us* by incarnation.

I come now to consider Mr. Loud's notion of the Lord's descent into hell. I think the altar made of whole stones, upon

which no tool was to be lifted - the golden altar - and the altar of brass, or brazen altar-were all types of our Lord's divinity; upon which, as upon the altar, the humanity was offered in sacrifice to God the Father. For it is the altar that sanctifies the gift; and for our sakes the Saviour sanctified himself. And it is clear that the Lord's *feet*, which denote strength, are compared to *brass*, his *faithfulness* to a *girdle of gold*; and he is called "the stone of Israel." And thus he is compared to the different materials of which the Jewish altars were composed. The *horns* of the altar likewise were a refuge for sinners, Chro. xxi, 14; 1 Kings, ii. 28; typical of the mighty Horn of salvation raised up in the house of God's servant David, Luke, i. 69; who is the only refuge that God has set before us. But Mr. Loud told me that the altar was a type of God the Father; but I think it is not a very easy matter to find an inanimate type of him. Besides, Christ, and not God the Father, is the truth of all the types, and the substance of all the legal shadows. Moreover, the sacrifices were offered *upon* the altar, not *to* the altar; but upon the altar to God. And it is plain that the altar was greater than the gift, because it sanctified the gift; and it is as true that our Lord's divinity, which offered up the humanity, is greater than the humanity that was offered up.

Furthermore, when the sacrifices under the law were offered on the altar, there was an end of the offering, without any thing done that prefigured a descent into hell. Nor was the fire, in which the victim was consumed, called *hell* fire, but *holy* fire, and the fire of the altar.

And we may add, that the sacrifice was offered immediately to God; and immediately after the priest pronounced God's blessing on the people; Num. vi. 24; without any thing like a space of three days, exhibiting, our Lord's sufferings beyond the cross.

And, as the burnt offerings were accepted of God upon the altar, Isaiah, lvi. 7; so the offering of our dear Lord was accepted when finished on the cross; for he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and, having said thus, he gave up the Ghost," Luke, xxiii. 46. The soul of our Lord was received from the *cross*, not from *hell*. "He made his soul an offering for sin;" and to God the Father he offered it, and into the Father's hands he commended it, not into hell fire; and yielded up the ghost ñ it did not sink into the bottomless pit.

It may be further observed, that the Saviour is our forerunner and our example, and we are to tread in his steps, to drink of his cup, and are "planted together in the likeness of his death;" and the utmost of the saints' sufferings is carrying the cross, and dying for his sake: but, if he went into hell, we do in that sense by no means tread in his steps, nor are we in that sense planted together in the likeness of his death. Nor do we understand by the phrases "yielded up the ghost," as Jacob did, or commending, the spirit to God, as Stephen did, any thing like a descent into hell. The souls of the saints return to God who gave them; and so did the soul of Christ when it was made an offering, for sin. His yielding up the ghost in death, and his commending, his spirit into his Father's hands, as well as his resurrection from the dead, are earnest and pledges of the blessed death, happy end, glorious departure, and certain resurrection, of the saints; who commend their souls to God, die in faith, and yield up the ghost, when the soul returns to the Almighty, and is numbered and arranged among "the spirits of just men made perfect," while the body rests in hope of a glorious and certain resurrection. And such was the blessed end of the Saviour when he had finished the work upon the cross - "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth," Isa. liii. 9. He made his grave with the *wicked* by becoming, our surety, or by being, made sin for us by imputation, and so was numbered with the

transgressors; but his grave was made with the *rich* in his death. Mark that-in death he made his grave with the *rich* not among the poor and wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, who go quick into hell;" but with the rich he made his grave - rich in faith, rich towards God, possessed of all true riches, rich in merit, rich in good works, and heir of all things: and in the possession of all these true riches be made his grave, as soon as the work was finished.

Furthermore, the *blood* of the sacrifice is called the *life* of it and by the blood of the sacrifice were the Israelites cleansed in a ceremonial way; and so, when the blood of Christ was shed, our redemption was completely obtained; for we are declared to be redeemed "by the blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Our redemption is always said to be by the blood of Christ, but never by the torments of hell fire.

I add, further, that when the Saviour bowed his head he declared, as his dying testimony, "It is finished." But Mr. Loud objected to this: saying that his meaning was - that the mockery and insults of the Jews were finished. This is a very empty meaning, if the dying testimony of our great Deliverer contains no more than this. Besides, if this were the Lord's meaning, it is not true; for the Jews insulted him, mocked, reviled, and railed on him, both in his person and in his members, long after this. They blasphemed him, compelled some of his followers to curse him; and Paul persecuted him; of which he complains out of heaven long after this. Yea, the mockery and insults of Jews and infidels are not finished yet, nor will they be so long as the long-suffering mercy of the Lord permits such wretched men as Mr. Loud to live upon the earth. It remains, therefore, that the words "It is finished" must have a better, a truer, and a more pregnant meaning.

He bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" and no farther than the tree did he bear them. There the Surety paid the fatal score, and cancelled the total debt; that was finished.

He was made a curse for us; for it is written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." That curse pursued him no farther than the tree: redemption from the curse was then and there finished.

The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. He spoiled principalities and powers; he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the death of the cross. Victory over devils, therefore, was obtained, and the complete conquest of them was then and there finished.

The handwriting, of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, he took out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The bondage of the law, the terrors of the law, the wrath of God revealed in the law, pursued and held the Saviour no farther than the cross. This was all ur life for the brethren. But there never was, nor ever will be, nor do we ever read of, any obedience performed in hell fire.

Hence it appears plain that the ceremonial law had its full accomplishment and its end in the death of Christ. The moral law was magnified by a perfect obedience both to its precept and penalties, the body of sins were destroyed, the old man was crucified, devils spoiled and conquered, judgment was fully executed, truth was cleared, wrath appeased, the paschal lamb offered, and the gates of heaven opened, the grand oblation was offered, complete atonement made, reconciliation obtained, the flaming sword sheathed, peace made, a new and living way consecrated, Justice fully satisfied, God well pleased, the ransom price paid, everlasting righteousness brought in, a jail delivery proclaimed, a fountain for sin opened, a sure foundation laid, the elect sanctified and redeemed, the middle wall of partition broken down, and

salvation in the executionary part completed and eternally finished, without any suffering, in the regions of the damned. He made peace for us by the blood of his cross. All the above things, are implied in the dying testimony of the faithful and true witness, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he bowed his head, and said, "It is finished."

But Mr. Loud objects this text - "Whom God hath raised, having, loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it, " Acts, ii. 24. Which he says were the pains that he endured in *hellfire*, which were loosed when he was taken from that prison. If the Saviour's soul lay three days and three nights in hell, the work was far from being *finished* on the cross, though he bowed his head, and declared it was. The word here called *pains* of death, or *sorrows* of death, is expressive of the sufferings of his soul under our sins, the wrath of God, the buffetings of Satan, the sword of Justice, the curse of the law, and being forsaken by his Father; and is the same word as is used to express the pangs of child birth, or the sorrows of a woman in labour, which the prophet Isaiah calls his travail, which he was to endure, and then he was to "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" in our salvation: which travail came upon him some days before his death, one pain after another; and every pain stronger and stronger, till the travail was over. "Now is my soul troubled," John, xii. 27. And in the garden he was sorrowful, and sore amazed, till at length he breaks out and complains of it - "My soul is exceeding, sorrowful, even unto death." Here are the sorrows, or pains of death on him; or, as he himself says, "the sorrows of death are fallen upon me, and an horror hath overwhelmed me." And, when travail came heavier still, he prayed to God; and afterwards, when more bitter pangs came on, he sweat blood; and, when more oppressive still, he, being in an agony, prayed the more earnestly, till an angel appeared" and strengthened him; after this he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." But on the

cross all his travail, the pains or sorrows of death came on him again; it was the Jews' hour, and the powers of darkness. And here he might truly say, "Behold, all ye that pass by, was ever any sorrow like my sorrow!" Here it was that the snares of death and flames of wrath got hold of him; the sword of Justice, the wrath of God, and the sins of men, met all together upon him; and to complete the dreadful scene, his Father forsook him, which he had never done before. Darkness likewise overspread the world; to shew the inexpressible sufferings of his soul as well as his body. At last he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" At which cry "he was heard in that he feared." The horrors of his soul were soon dispelled; the dreadful lower and awful storm blew over; Satan's shafts were spent; the sword of Justice was in its scabbard: the Father began to shine upon him; the dust and ashes of our sins dropped to the foot of the altar; the Holy Ghost sweetly operated as a comforter, and lent his friendly aid; at which the pains of death were loosed from his soul; his sorrows, or soul travail, was at an end; and with a loud voice he cried, "It is finished;" commended his spirit into the hands of his Father; bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost; and through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God." Thus "the pains of death were loosed, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" any longer than till the soul was made an offering, for sin; which through the eternal Spirit was offered, and by that Holy Spirit conveyed, or carried, into the hands of God the Father.

There is no suffering in hell, mentioned by the prophet, between the travail of his soul and being, satisfied with seeing his seed. No, nor yet between his being, obedient unto death and being, highly exalted.

But Mr. Loud fetches all his arguments from the words "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," Acts, ii. 27. The sufferings of his soul in tasting of

death, and the grave, is what is there meant by *hell*. Hell torments to a sinner lie in hearing his own sins, in the lashes of conscience, in the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the torment of devils, utter darkness, and banishment from God; of all which the Saviour tasted for us, and then these pains were loosed. Hell, in scripture language, does not always mean the bottomless pit. Jonah says he cried "out of the belly of hell," and God heard his voice. But there is a deal of difference between the sufferings of Jonah's mind in the bottom of the sea, and sufferings in bottomless perdition and much more between the regions of the damned and the carcass of a whale. And certain it is that Jonah was a type of Christ, in being a sign to the Ninevites; and Christ being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and then rising, from the dead, was to be the only sign that was to be given to that adulterous generation of the Jews.

Furthermore, that the soul of our Saviour did not descend into hell, may plainly be seen by his answer to the thief upon the cross. The thief prayed to be remembered by him when he came into his kingdom; whose propitious answer to him was, "Verily, I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," Luke, xxiii. 43. Which Paradise, Paul says, is "the third heaven," 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. Nor is this 2000 to be understood of the divine nature of Christ; for that is omnipresent. and immensity itself, and fills all space; and, in one sense, never left Paradise at all, for he was in the third heaven, though incarnate upon earth as it is written "And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven," John, iii. 13. Here is a coming down from heaven, which is so called because of his humiliation in the assumption of human nature; and yet (in the present tense) it is said that the Son of man is in heaven; which is true respecting his divine presence, though incarnate. The Saviour's answer, therefore, plainly implies thus much; this day I shall make my soul an offering

for sin, and through the eternal Spirit it will be conveyed into my Father's hands in the third heaven, and thy soul shall be conveyed there likewise by the angels; so that thou shalt *this day*, before midnight, be with me in Paradise; which is a scriptural solution of the text, and by no means contrary to the analogy of faith. Hence it is plain that the Lord suffered no hell torments between the death of the cross and the third heaven; and it is as plain that there is no place of punishment between the death of the saint and Paradise. Elijah went from earth to heaven in a fiery chariot, and Lazarus went from death, by the angels, into Abraham's bosom; which differs much from purgatory. By the blood of the cross peace was made by the Saviour; and God declares that, if we mark the perfect man and behold the upright, we shall see the end of that man to be peace, not purgatory: and so we may conclude that the end of faith is the salvation of the soul.

It is a pity that Mr. Loud did not consider Peter's sermon, recorded in the Acts, a little more minutely, before he had perverted one word, to contradict all the rest; where he would have seen his vile notion (of the Saviour's partaking no more of the human nature than his *handkerchief*, or his supposed funnel) plainly and fully refuted. But so dexterous is the spirit of error in him, at turning, all things into bane, that he can grasp one word to support his notion of a descent into hell, but he could not see the other, which contradicts him to his face with an oath. But, as he has neglected this, I must produce it. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption," Acts, ii. 29, 30, 31. I think Mr. Loud will find it a hard task to prove that Christ's divinity can,

in any sense whatever be called *the fruit of David's loins*, because the text asserts that he is *the fruit of his loins according to the flesh*, not according, to his Godhead. For the Godhead of Christ is David's *root*, which gave David his existence as a creature, and which gave him his existence as a saint; and which root supplied him both with natural life and with grace; yea, Christ as God is called David's *Jehovah*, who made him, governed him, gave him grace, and saved his soul; whom he acknowledged, in whom he believed, and whom he worshipped. Divinity, or divinity changed into flesh, can never be the fruit of a fallen mortal's loins. But God swore to David that, according to the flesh, Christ should be *the fruit of his body*, Psal. cxxxii. 11; *the fruit of his loins*, Acts, ii. 30; *his son*, Matt. xx. 30; *his offspring*, Rev. xxii. 16; and accordingly he was the virgin Mary's *seed*, who was of the house and lineage of David, and which *seed* was once in David's loins; and, if it were not so, what becomes of the oath of God; God cannot be perjured. O what sad lengths men go when destitute of the Spirit, and given up to believe a lie! and how clear it is, from the above texts, that it was the humanity, and not the Deity, of Christ that suffered. Peter speaks of no other parts suffering but the soul and body of Christ. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Which terms, *hell* and *corruption*, are both explained by the apostle himself; the first by *loosing the pains of death*, the second by *raising the body from the tomb*. The pains of death were loosed from his soul just as had ended his first cry on the cross, as we have proved, and as Paul says, "he was heard in that he feared;" and the answer was given to that bitter cry. Upon which God shone into his soul, as well pleased, lifted up the light of his countenance upon him, filled him with unutterable joy and comfort: all which is expressed in the following, words; "I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad, my flesh also shall rest in hope." As soon as his heart rejoiced the pains of death were

loosed; and, as soon as the joy of his heart had made his tongue glad, he cried, " It is finished," bowed his head, gave up the ghost, and all was over. His soul went without spot into the hands of God, filled with unspeakable joy and gladness, where sorrow and sighing for ever flee away. And this is expressly called "the joy that was set before him, for the sake of which he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii. 2. But to lie three days and three nights in hell fire can never be called a joy set before him, as an encouragement to him to endure the cross; for the cross itself would have been much lighter than hell fire. Peter and Paul both agree in this-that there was no sufferings endured beyond the cross; there it was that the pains of death were loosed, and soon after the power of death was loosed from the body also.

For, as dying pains, or the pains of death, which end in a dissolution of the body from the soul, at which instant the soul goes to God to receive its doom, and as it is the body that bears the pains of temporal death, and by which separating pains the body is left in the bonds of corruption; so the Jews, who viewed Christ as a deceiver, an impostor, and a sinner, expected that this would unavoidably have been his fate; hence malice requested that his death might be by crucifixion, which was a Roman, not a Jewish death, hoping thereby to bring, his soul and body under the curse of God, because their law says that he which hangeth upon a tree is cursed of God. Hence malice wished and expected that the end of Christ, whom they hated with cruel hatred, would have been *damnation*; and they were so confident of this, that without hesitation they imprecated his blood on themselves and all their children; and therefore preferred a murderer before him, and crucified him between two thieves. This malicious evil, and blood crime, Peter charges home upon them, calling, it the deed of their wicked hands; telling them that they were all mistaken; that the pains of death were loosed; and that this

Holy One, whom they judged as an impostor, did not see corruption, for the pains of his soul were loosed on the cross, and the other in the tomb; that he was risen from the dead, and that they were all witnesses of it. And he adds, "Let all the house of Israel know that God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." This awful charge was accompanied with the sword of the Spirit, and they were pricked in their heart at such an awful testimony against them, which extorted from them the following cry Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These convinced Jews saw their awful mistake. They thought that they had blotted out the name of Jesus from under heaven 2000 years, and that it should have been no more in remembrance; while the chief rulers and priests, having cast him out of the vineyard and slain him, vainly thought that his inheritance should have been theirs. But he was raised up to requite them. So they were all mistaken; and so is Mr. Loud, who supposes that he descended into the regions of the damned; for the text says it was the pains of *death* that were loosed, and not the pains of *hell*.

But there is another text produced in favour of the Saviour's descension into hell, which is I Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that he might bring us to God), being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*, which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering, of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing; wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." There is nothing in this passage that in the least favours, much less supports, the notion of our Lord's suffering in hell fire; but the contrary. The apostle asserts that "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." The word once may be applied to the whole life of Christ, for he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief all his days; he suffered from the manger to the cross. But the apostle seems to confine the word to his sufferings on the

cross, as himself explains it - "being put to death in the flesh." What is before called his *once* suffering is here called " being put to death in the flesh;" which words confine the Lord's soul sufferings and his bodily sufferings both to be endured and ended on the cross; for it was in the flesh he suffered, and in the flesh he was put to death: but disembodied, or out of the flesh, he never suffered at all; there is nothing, of this in all the Bible; consequently he never was in hell; for, if he had, he must have suffered more than once; once on the *cross*, and once more in *hell fire*.

Moreover, the apostle confines the Lord's sufferings and death to his human nature only. He suffered once - he was "put to death in the flesh." The body suffered intolerably, and the soul suffered in the body; but not his divinity - he was "put to death in the flesh," but not in his divine person, for that is an uncreated spirit, and hath not flesh and bones as his human body had. The last Adam, the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven, could never die; "I live for ever," Deut. xxxii. 40.

The resurrection of Christ is attributed to all the three persons in the Godhead. He is said to be "raised up by the glory of the Father." He is also said to raise himself; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "I lay down my life of myself, and I take it again." And by the Spirit it is said to be done; "being, put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." In short, he was raised by the Father's appointment, by his commandment, for the glory of his name, and by his joint power, who had received his soul, and now sent it back again to its tabernacle; when the Holy Ghost, through whom he had offered himself to God, now returned with the soul, and quickened the body in the tomb, animated it, and filled it with life; which life the second person in the Godhead took again. But it may be objected, if Christ commended his spirit into his Fathers hands, and the Holy Ghost conveyed the soul immediately to the Father, and it went to heaven, how came

the Saviour to say to Mary, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father?" &c. By the same rule it might be asked what Peter meant, when he said, "for David is not ascended up into heaven, for his sepulchre is with us to this day." Doubtless David's soul was among the spirits of just men made perfect, though his body was not risen from the tomb. The soul of Moses was seen in glory with Christ on the Mount, though God had buried his body in the country of Moab, where it is to this day. Beside, though the Saviour's soul was offered to God, and was on the same day in Paradise, yet the body had not at that time ascended. Moreover, it was the body, not the soul, that Mary was going to touch. She was going, to catch him by the feet, and worship him; but was forbidden, as he had other business for her to do; which was, to tell his brethren of his resurrection. At a more convenient time she might touch him, and handle him too, as he commanded them all to do. " See, and handle me, that it is I myself." Now it was that "Truth sprung out of the earth, when Righteousness (well pleased) looked down from heaven. Now did God give that which is good, for the holy land had yielded her increase. His righteousness goes to heaven before him, and sets us in the way of his steps, Psal. xxxv. 11, 12. Now was "the branch of the Lord beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel," Isa. iv. 2. This is the "handful of corn upon the tops of the mountains." The mountains shall bring peace to the people," Psa. vii. 2, 3. "And the little hills rejoice on every side," Psalm lxxv. 12. This is "the wave sheaf," and "the first fruits of them that slept;" the first that ever was raised to an immortal life, and the first that ever saw the path to eternal glory in heaven from tomb. "thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore," Psalm xvi. 11. These endless pleasures at the Father's right hand, is "the joy that was set before him; for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of

God," Heb. xii. 2. And here we may clearly see the glorious work of each person in the Trinity. Here is the Incarnate Word laying, down the life of his humanity; the Eternal Spirit, through which he offered himself, attending the soul into the Father's hands, and quickening the body at the soul's return to it; and God the Father accepting the sin offering, and by the blood of the covenant sending, the prisoners forth from the pit, as a proof that the price was accepted. But I have run away from the subject - "By the Spirit be was quickened."

And by which Spirit "he went and preached to the spirits in prison." The spirits in prison, are the souls that are now in hell: the wicked, at their departure from this life, are said to go quick into hell, where they are "gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit [or dungeon]; and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited," Isa. xxiv. 22. Here they are confined, and after many days they are to be visited; and this visit will be when death and hell deliver up their dead, and both body and soul appear in judgement, to receive their awful doom, when they will be sent away, body and soul, into everlasting punishment. Their resurrection is a resurrection to damnation. But then why, or to what purpose, should the Saviour preach to these prisoners, seeing the gulf of God's irrevocable decree is fixed, so that none can pass from thence to heaven? and, as for the elect, they are ransomed from the pit, and therefore can never go there. Besides, God declares that those "that go down into the pit cannot hope for his truth," Isa. xxxviii. 18. And, if no hope for truth is laid, why should truth be preached to the hopeless? and, as they cannot hope for his truth, it is clear that truth was never preached to them; for Christ, by his Spirit, never preached the gospel to them that are in hell. The imprisoned souls mentioned in the text are what Peter calls "the world of the ungodly," that perished by water; and the Spirit of Christ in Noah (who was a 2000 preacher of righteousness) preached to them in the antediluvian world, *while* the ark was preparing,

and *while* the long-suffering of God waited. But Peter says they were disobedient; and God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, seems, he is flesh." For which disobedience, in resisting and quenching the Spirit of Christ in Noah, their souls, or spirits, are now in the prison of hell; to whom no gospel has ever been preached since their imprisonment; no, nor ever will be. The grave cannot praise the Lord; death in the abstract cannot celebrate Him, Isa. xxxviii. 18. It remains, therefore, that the time when the Spirit of Christ preached to them was while the ark was preparing.

Of two natures in Christ. This union took place in the purpose of God from everlasting; and the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, which he was to take on him, called sometimes the *fruit* of David's body, and the *fruit* of his loins, and which was the virgin's *seed*; yea, that individual *seed* was pitched upon, was chosen of God, and appointed, in his decree, to be united to the *word*, even from all eternity. Hence he is called God's Elect, in whom his soul delighteth. In that eternal decree he was appointed to assume that chosen seed in the fullness of time, and in that nature he was to be exalted to the high office of King Messiah, and only Mediator. On which account he tells us, respecting his Godhead, which was in the bosom of the Father, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." But, with respect to the appointed union, and his exaltation in the human nature to the office of mediatorial king, he speaketh to us on this wise, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," Prov. viii. 22, 23. Which must respect the manhood, for the Godhead cannot be higher than it is. Thus the Father viewed him as future man and Mediator; and, as such, entered into covenant with him: on which account he is called the man at his right hand, Psalm lxxx. 7; before the union took place. Thus the dear Redeemer, as chosen, appointed, and set up, as our covenant head and glorious Mediator, was viewed as man from eternity; and

therefore said to be the Son of man that came down from heaven; and, on the account of his agreeing to be future man to redeem us, it is said that he went forth in unparalleled love, and, in this eternal council, from everlasting; as it is written, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall *he* come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity," Mic. v. 2. On account of this decree of God, and the covenant made, and the office to which the Saviour was appointed, he tells us that his love to the chosen, who were given to him in eternity, who were to be created by him in time, and who would be ruined by the fall - I say his love to them was such, that, at the creation, while the terraqueous globe was framing, he was then "rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 31. When at that time the earth was not inhabited, nor had the children of men any existence but in the decree and purpose of God.

Furthermore, the Father fixed an eternal love upon the future seed appointed to be united to the *word*; and, having chosen that seed, and appointed it to this future union, he chose an innumerable company of the children of men in him, called the *elect*; and gave them *to* him; united them with him, and loved them with an eternal love *in* him; and this is called *his good will to them, and the thoughts of his heart, which stand fast to a thousand generations*. Thus "he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both of one" ñ of one God, and of one Father. "

I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

In the fullness of time the *eternal word* assumed the appointed *seed*, the *child* was born to us, and to us a son was given. And now was fulfilled the ancient prophecy; "And their noble

one" (for that is the right reading), shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me? saith Jehovah," Jer. xxx. 21. Mark, the *noble one* is by Christ applied to himself, and is called a certain nobleman who went to receive a kingdom, Luke, xix. 12. Thus God performed the good thing promised to the house of Israel, by sending, his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and who was "God manifest in the flesh." From the union that took place between the divine person of the Son of God, and the woman's seed in the virgin's womb, by incarnation, and which union continued throughout the Saviour's life, which subsisted also undissolved in death, and which will continue to all eternity, for in it he is a priest of an everlasting priesthood, and king of an everlasting kingdom; from this union, I say, springs all the invaluable and intrinsic merit of the Saviour. He thought it no robbery to be equal with God, when he took on him the form of a servant; hence springs the dignity of an everlasting righteousness. He was God's Fellow when he was smitten upon the cross, and therefore "perfected for ever all that are sanctified" He was the Prince of Life when he died; and so "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

As to the *human nature*, it was entirely free from all original sin, nor did it ever contract any sin. It was filled with every grace in perfection; grace was poured into his lips, and an eternal blessing was on him; the Holy Ghost, with all his gifts, and in all his fullness, was on the manhood, and abode upon it; and that "holy thing" was in union with the eternal I AM. This is the Christ of God, the foundation that he has laid in Zion, and the darling of every believing soul. And without this union it is not easy to conceive how God and man, at an infinite distance, could ever come together, so as for man to have "fellowship with the Father." But "God was manifest in the flesh." And this is the great mystery of godliness, which

the heavens have revealed to men, and is the fountain of all the godliness that ever was, or ever will be, revealed in men. All religion, that is not received from the fullness of Christ, is nothing but a shew, *a form of godliness without the power*; which renders the performer, in the sight of God, no more than a hypocrite, or a wolf in sheep's clothing. For, as God appointed the union between the two natures of Christ in eternity, and likewise the union between Christ and his seed, so from eternity he predestinated them to be conformed, in time, to the image of his Son. Hence, when he sent him forth, it was to gather together in him the [predestinated] children of God that were scattered abroad. He was lifted up upon the cross to draw all these men unto him; he was exhibited as the promised Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people was to be; and exalted to the right hand of God, that we might be called to the fellowship of him, and, by the reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, be joined to him, and "made one spirit with him," and so have "our affections set at the right hand of God where Christ sitteth." Christ being, the fountain of all godliness, all fullness dwelling in him, so out of his fullness all grace must be received, and be continually derived from him, by virtue of union with him; of which union I intend now to speak.

And, first, there are many things which the Spirit of God performs in the elect sinner before this eternal union call take place, so as to be manifest, known, felt, and enjoyed, in time. And,

1. The poor sinner is naturally proud, and God beholds the proud afar off. The soul being, by pride at a distance from God, shews the need of humbling grace; for God says he will dwell with the humble and the contrite spirit.

2. All men are by nature unbelievers. God has concluded all men in unbelief; and an evil heart of unbelief is called a departing from the living God. Hence appears the need of a work of faith on the soul; and faith is God's work.
3. The sinner's carnal mind is enmity against God; not subject to his law, nor can be; which shews the need of a powerful application of the word of reconciliation.
4. The will is biased wholly to evil, as appears by the following parable: "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard; but he answered and said, I will not. "But Omnipotence bows the will, and evangelical repentance makes the sinner willing. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of my power," which the parable explains, by saying, "but afterwards he repented and went."
5. The sinner is by nature whole Hearted; "the whole do not need the physician, but them that are sick." This shews the need of a wounded spirit. Christ was sent "to bind up the broken hearted," and to heal that which was sick.
6. It is sin that separates between God and the soul; which shews the need of pardon, before God and the sinner can come together. "He shall give them the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins."
7. The sinner's ways are not God's ways, nor his thoughts God's thoughts; which shews the necessity of being turned into God's ways, and of having the thoughts of the heart changed, before this union can take place. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"
8. The sinner must be self-emptied, and come to the Saviour poor in spirit, and with a spiritual appetite,

before he can close in with the Lord; for he "filleth the hungry with good things, but he sends the rich empty away."

9. The sinner is wise in his own conceit, but God takes the wise in their own craftiness. This shews the need of being convinced of our ignorance. "If any man will be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise;" for "God hath chosen the foolish of this world to confound the wise."
10. The sinner must be sensible of his own weakness. "Strong, men shall utterly fall;" but God "giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."
11. A teachable temper, and a softened spirit, is required in the sinner that is brought near to the great prophet of the church; for all God's children shall be taught of him. But it is the meek that he will guide in judgement, the meek will he teach his way.
12. The carnal mind must be renewed, and weaned from its natural worldly mindedness; for "to be carnally minded is death;" but the soul that is brought into this union must "have the mind of Christ."
13. There must be a feeling sense of condemnation for the want of righteousness. God justifies the ungodly. The best robe will never be thankfully received, till the sinner is convinced of his own nakedness. Christ receives his spouse in the wedding, garment that he has provided; it is them that hunger and thirst after righteousness that shall be filled.
14. There can be no union between persons, unless there be some knowledge of each other, either by personal

interview or by report. And so in this union. "They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them; "and this is done by believing the gospel report, and by the manifestation of Christ to the soul. "I will manifest myself to them which thou hast given me out of the world."

15. There must be mutual affections where there is real union. Enemies can never find unity of the spirit; for this God has made provision also. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

The different impressions and motions of the soul under the influence of the ever blessed Spirit, in bringing about and affecting this union, are three; divine sensations, heavenly motions, and supernatural affections.

1. Divine sensations give the first spring. Inward troubles about salvation render every human comforter a physician of no value; this, under the Spirit's influence, drives the thoughts from earth to heaven. "I thought upon God and was troubled."
2. Earnest anxiety, which is divine motion as inward trouble abounds. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early."
3. A longing eye fixed, and affections going, out after him, in whom help is expected. "A man shall look to his Maker, and have respect to the Holy One of Israel."
4. A feeble confidence of succeeding in the earnest pursuit. "I will arise, and go to my Father." And we know that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is,

and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

5. A real sense of the need of a superabounding power to incline the heart. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned."
6. A sense of natural reluctance, and of the need of divine attraction. "Draw me, and we will run after thee."
7. The insufficiency of all human aid. " All refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul ñ then I said, thou art my salvation.
8. A cutting disappointment in all human succour. All is vanity and vexation of soul; then better relief is sought. "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

I now come to touch upon the scriptural description of this ever blessed union; and, first, it is compared to the union that subsists between the foundation of a building and its superstructure. "No other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus; and ye, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" This union between a foundation and building, is a supportive union, and shews how all the intolerable load was laid on the Saviour. The foundation is that which bears the burden of the whole fabric. And indeed the Saviour of men bore the whole weight of our sins, the weight of God's wrath, of the law's requirements, of the infinite demands of justice, and of our infirmities also; yea, himself took our sicknesses; and ever since the government of his kingdom has stood upon his shoulders; while all the cares of his family, and all their burdens, all their infirmities, together with all their failings, short comings, imperfections, and backsliding, have been cast upon him. "Thou hast made me to

serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. "And what follows? "I, even I, am he that blot out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isaiah, xliii. 25. Hence we see how every part of the weight of the whole building of mercy, in the ancient purpose of God, in the execution of that purpose, in the administrations of grace, in the reception of the saints, and in hearing them with all their helplessness all their days, was laid upon Christ, as it is written, "I am he that bare thee from the womb, yea, from the womb; and to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you. "This foundation bore every part of the load, even from the ancient settlements in eternity to the delivering up the kingdom to the Father in everlasting glory. Hence he is called "a tried stone, a sure foundation, elect and precious;" and to them that believe he is precious indeed.

This union is compared to the union that subsists between the head and the members of the human body. The *discerning* Christian is called the *eye*, the *attentive* and careful soul the *ear*, the *diligent* saint the *foot*, the *communicative* saint the *mouth*, the *savoury* saint the *nose*, the *liberal* soul the *hand*. Each of these are the particular members of Christ, and the whole collectively are his mystical body. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And, if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? After hearing it starts... If the whole body were an ear, where were the seeing? And, if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular; and God hath set some in the church - first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," &c. 1. Cor xii. Here Paul shews that

every member hath his particular grace and gifts. One is an apostle, to lay the foundation; another a prophet, which is an eye, to see what is coming on in the world; then teachers, to communicate what they have received; then miracles, which are wonders performed by the Saviour in answer to prayer; then gifts of healing which is stretching forth the Lord's hand when the prayer of the righteous prevails; then helps-every member, by his walk, by his conversation, by his experience, by his sympathy with the afflicted, by his prayers, or by his liberality, is a help in this mystical body; then governments-mothers in Israel are governesses to the young female converts, to teach the young women to be sober, chaste, keepers at home. The fathers in the church give their cautions and counsels to the young men in faith. Deacons are over the poor; the minister, he rules by the word and doctrine; while each living, member of the whole body, by the hand of faith, holds the head, which influences and directs the whole body; from which head all the body, by being of one mind, of one judgement, one faith, one hope, and one spirit, are joined together; and, by the hands of mutual affection, spiritual unity, and of gospel peace, having, nourishment ministered from the head to each member, and from one member to another through the compacting joints, that knits all the members of the body together, the whole body increases in number and in strength, with the increase of God, 2 Col. xix. The neck, with its joints and sinews, that holds this glorious head and mystical body together, are the self-moving love of God, his eternal decree, and the bond of the covenant; which for ever keep this body and the head in union; while the divine veracity, brought to light by the gospel, lays a foundation for the fullest assurance of faith. "Whom he did foreknow them he did predestinate, and whom he predestinated them he called, and whom he called them he justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." This is the good will of God in Christ Jesus, revealed to us, and by the Spirit of God wrought in us; and this is Zion's only security, which makes the glorious

inheritance sure to all the seed, and the church that has an experimental knowledge of these things, that has experienced the application and power of them, and tasted the sweetness and felt the enjoyment of them, and who by the eye of faith sees them, and in love holds them fast, is the Lord's delightful spouse indeed. "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck Song iv. 9. This union is father set forth by;

The union that subsists between the vine and its branches. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." There is nothing more fruitful than a vine. There is nothing that can be called *wood* that is so weak, and yet there is no *root* in the earth that contains so much life, sap, and nourishment, as the root of a vine; nor is there any plant that is productive of so much generous liquor, nor any thing that can produce any thing stronger, if it be distilled. Witness spirits of wine. And so in this union. Who could ever have thought that such great things should have been accomplished by the Saviour, when he appeared in the world a *poor and needy man, a worm, and no man, the despised of the people*, and crucified through weakness? This was David's *offspring*; but David's *root* was hid in David's *branch*; and in that ever blessed root is the natural life of all mankind, the life of angels, and the eternal life of all the chosen millions. "In him we all live, and move, and have our being;" and from him the blessing, of eternal life is received by all that believe; and from him the new wine of the kingdom is poured forth, the wine of eternal love, which is strong as death; and whoever drinks thereof forgets his poverty, and remembers his misery no more. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except ye abide in me." To abide sensibly in him, is to stand by faith in his strength, to have the mind swaddled with his truth, to shine in his light, to enjoy his countenance, to feel his power, to find the heart enlarged by a sense of his love, to observe his goings and

comings, to bemoan his absence, to be entertained with his visits, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith he has made us free; and not to be entangled in the traps of error, in the servitude of sin, nor with the yoke of legal bondage. Sometimes the branches of a vine are without leaves, and without fruit; but the branch that is in the vine still has life in its root, in which life lies both the leaves and the fruit, and nothing is wanted but the sun to bring them forth. So the child of God, through slips and falls, often loses the external verdure of his profession; at which times faith is languid, love cold, patience in a decaying state, hope at a low ebb, zeal abated, and all joy apparently gone. But Christ shines, and revives his work, communicates refreshings from his presence, the wind blows afresh upon the garden, and the beloved is once more invited to eat his own pleasant fruits. But, "if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." A man may be in Christ *Professionally*, but not spiritually. There are Christians in *name* and *shew*, and there are Christians in *spirit* and *principle*. He that is in Christ only by profession and confession, by head knowledge, by gifts, by zeal, by flushes of joy, springing up from the stirrings and motions of natural affections, is sure never to abide, for want of deepness of earth," or a broken heart; for want of moisture or the wellspring of divine life; and for the want of "root in themselves," which is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Such are cast forth by the church, either for their open profanity, or else for their damnable heresies which they embrace, and by which they are discovered, and for which they are cast forth, as a branch is pruned or cutoff; and soon they are withered. Their joy, zeal, and first knowledge, all wither together, and men gather them; impostors, heretics, apostates, hypocrites, o 2000 r worldlings, gather them into their company, and unto their assembly; and the end of them

is to be burned, body and soul, in hell fire. This union is set forth by;

The union that subsists between the husband and the wife; which union exhibits the oneness of nature between Christ and his church. The human nature of Christ, which was Abraham's seed, the fruit of David's loins, the fruit of his body, the seed of the virgin, which was made of a woman, made and prepared of the substance of her body, and which is apart of the children's flesh and blood, which the Lord took, and of the same flesh and blood, for the scriptures say he took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14. This assumption of human nature, I say, by incarnation, shews the oneness of flesh between Christ and his spouse. He is clothed with a part of the children's flesh and blood. Hence we are said to be "members or his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" Eph. v. 30; and "no more twain, but they two shall be one flesh." But, if Loud's notion be true, they are not one flesh; for he says the Saviour's flesh was made of deity, but ours was made of earth; consequently, be cannot be said to be of *our* flesh, and *one* flesh with us; but the Spirit says we are one flesh. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church," Eph. v. 31, 32.

Furthermore, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, I Cor. vi. 17. All the elect are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The whole fullness of the Spirit is without measure in the Saviour; and the same Spirit operates and dwells in all the saints, whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. And, under the sweet influence of the Spirit of love, our glorious and eternal union with the Saviour is manifested to the elect sinner; for by the Spirit God calls us to the fellowship of his Son; and, when once the poor sinner feels Christ's love operating in him, and all his affections stirred up and going out after him, then he passes into the bond of the covenant, into the joy of the Lord,

and into the glorious liberty of the children of God; he enters into his rest, and rests from all his burdens, and from all his legal and dead works; and says for himself, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" while mutual affections, the bond of all perfectness, makes the union so clear, so close, so sweet, that they understand what he means when he says, "Believe that I am in you and you in me;" and again, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse."

This union being compared to that which subsists between the foundation and the building, shews us where all the weight of our sins, and the sufferings due to us, were laid; and where the sin-burdened, soul-sinking, and self-despairing sinner finds his resting place, when he is brought out of the horrible pit, and led to the rock that is higher than he; where he casts all his burdens and his cares, and where he finds his heart fixed on a firm basis, against which the gates of hell shall never preveil.

This union being represented by the *neck*, which joins the body to the head, and which head contrives and schemes for the welfare of every member of the body, is to set forth to us the union of the members among themselves; and how the head, Christ, in union with the body, guides, directs, influences, and actuates, the whole mystical body. "The wise man's eyes are in his [covenant] head." "The way of man is not in himself." "It is not in man that walks to direct his steps." "Be not like an horse or a mule, which have no understanding and I will guide thee with mine eye," saith the Lord. And indeed the Lord contrives, and provides, for every member of the whole body. Healing, and health, food and phisic, are all in him, and of him. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Yea, the health of our countenance and our God. "I am the bread of life." And it is he that purged our sins by his own blood. The wandering member he brings back, the weak he carries, the ewe with young he gently leads, the blind he illuminates, the

dead he quickens, the cold he inflames, and works in all both to will and to do.

This union being represented by the vine and its branches, shews the root in which our life lies, where it is hid, and the way in which it is communicated to us. And, as the vine branch, which often appears without leaves or fruit, has life still in its root, so had the elect life given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, though they are by nature the children of wrath even as others, and dead in trespasses and sins, till quickened by the Lord of life and glory.

Furthermore, the vine, contrary to most plants, never bears fruit in the old wood; the new branch, and its new fruit in the branch, both spring together. If no life be communicated, there is no new branch; and, if no new branch, no fruit. So old nature can never bring forth fruit unto God. The new and living principle, the new man of grace, must be formed in the soul before fruit can be expected. No man can gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. In Christ is our fruit found; the new man of grace comes from Christ's fullness of grace; the Holy Ghost operates, and produces his own fruits, which are called the graces, or fruits, of the Spirit; and from the tuition of grace we learn to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world and from the operations of grace all good works proceed. "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." Moreover, as the new branch of the vine, the new cluster, and the leaves, all lie in the life, which is in the root of the vine, so our new man, new fruit, and the verdant leaves of our holy profession, are all derived from Christ, who is our life and our holy root; and on which account, though at times we appear withered in our profession, and barren in our souls, yet, by virtue of our union with him, in him our leaf shall be green, our leaf in him shall not wither, nor shall we entirely cease from yielding fruit; yea, "they shall bring forth fruit in old

age, to shew that the Lord is upright," or righteous, or faithful, in giving to us, according to his covenant promise, the blessing of eternal life.

But, again; as the life of the branch, the fruit, and the leaf, all lie in the sap, which is the life of the vine, and in which it is secured and hid as in its root; and which life is drawn forth, and the branch, fruit, and leaf, are all set in a working motion by the warm enlivening rays of the sun; even so, when the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his beams, the barren desert becomes a fruitful field; and the degenerate plant of a strange vine appears with all its silverlings, and with all its blessed clusters.

This union being set forth by that which subsists between the man and his wife, not only exhibits the oneness of flesh and blood, and the oneness of spirit, between Christ and his church; but it sets forth the church's share in all the dignity, honour, wealth, and majesty of her husband. The wife is not only one flesh with her husband, but is likewise partner with him in every thing he has; and she will take care to let him know it, and will claim it, being taken "to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health." And so is this union. Christ is the bridegroom, she the bride; he is the husband, she the wife; he is the king, she the queen; he the king's son, she the daughter of the Lord God Almighty; he is a prince, she the princess, he is the lord, she is the elect lady. But they not only share in titles, in dignity, honour, and majesty, but in personal property also. She is to wear a crown, and to sit on 2000 his throne; she shares in his word, in his grace, in his mercy, in his spirit, in his kingdom, and in his glory, being an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. She must also share in his sufferings; she must drink of his cup, bear his cross; be planted together in the likeness of his death, partake of the afflictions of the gospel, lose all her reputation, and be hated of all men for his name's sake.

And in doing this he comforts her in all her tribulations that she endures; makes her bed in her sickness, when she cannot make it herself; supports her on the bed of languishing, that she may not faint or be strangled supplies her wants, that she may not be compelled to get out before she is able. He is touched with the feeling, of her infirmities, and nurses her tenderly; succours her under temptations, that she may not faint; makes a way for her escape, that she may not be imprisoned; sympathizes with her, by describing her case, and pitying her. In all our afflictions he is afflicted; he calls every cruel touch of her, a touch of the apple of his eye; and pronounces an awful and eternal woe to all that offend the least part of her, or the least member in her.

This union is further set forth by the art of ingrafting, For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, and partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the natural branches; "but, if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee," Rom. xi. 17, 18. This ingrafting, is said to be contrary to nature. The natural way of grafting, is to take a scion out of a good tree, which produces good fruit, and to graft it into a wild stock, the wood of which, being reduced to its natural standard, as it can sink no lower, will stand better, and endure longer in the earth, than the wood of a good tree, could a stock of such wood be procured. But our ingrafture is contrary to nature; for we are wild olive branches, cut out of a wild olive tree, which is by nature wild, and are ingrafted into a good olive tree, so as to partake of the goodness and fatness of the good tree; which wonderful ingrafting must in the end purge out all the wild nature of such a wild branch: and this is done in part at the sinners conversion, by implanting a principle of grace in the heart; and will be effectually accomplished when our mortal bodies shall put on immortality, and these corruptible bodies shall have put

on incorruption; for then mortality, with all its wildness, shall be swallowed up of life, and immortality be all in all.

This mystical union is set forth by the union between kings and their subjects. The king rules over his subjects, gives laws to them, demands tributes of them, and commands obedience to him. Hence Christ is called the king, of saints; by his righteous sceptre he rules in the midst of Jerusalem; the isles wait for his laws; and all the elect are made obedient to his will, and carry their tributes of praise and thanksgiving to him. They kiss the Son, set as king, on Zion's hill; put their trust under his shadow; and all that have felt the power of his sceptre agree in their petitions, that this olive tree would ever reign in and over their hearts, so as to subdue sin, dethrone Satan, and ever sit as supreme in all their affections.

Moreover, this union is set forth by that which subsists between the father and his children. The father loves and provides for his offspring, sees to their education, and endeavours to lay up something for them. So Christ is the everlasting father; the elect are his seed; he gives them eternal life, and the promise of the life that now is. All his children are taught of him; they are trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: and it is not yet known what that goodness is that he has laid up for them that trust in him before the sons of men. I come now to treat of the blessed effects of this mystical union.

And, first, persons in real union are divested of all prejudice to, and have a mutual affection for each other. And so the sinner is sweetly reconciled to his reconciling Lord, and loves him above every object in heaven above or in the earth beneath. "Whom have I heaven but thee, nor is there any upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee." Christ and his church, in union, deal with each other as real friends; they are well-wishers to each other's state, to their welfare, their family,

and all that they have. And so souls in union with Christ wish well to Zion, to her watchmen, and desire the universal spread of the gospel, the salvation of the elect, and that Christ may be glorified in and by them all.

Christ deals not with those who are in union with him as he does with bond servants and hypocrites. "The servant knows not what his Lord doth," nor does Christ take into his privy council the treacherous heart. "He did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of men, for he knew what was in man." But to his own elect he reveals all his heart. "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, for all things that I have heard of the Father I have made known unto you." Yea, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant" But these things are hid from the wise and prudent, for none of the wicked shall understand.

None but the elect, in friendship with the Lord, are admitted to his banquets of wine, or to the feasts of fat things on Zion's holy mountain. The marriage feasts, the feasts of tabernacles, the feast of harvest, and the feast of the passover, are all for Israelites. The enemy, the sophist, the bond slave, and the hypocrite, are no more than lookers-on at these entertainments: who envy every smiling, countenance, are provoked at every contrite heart, and filled with infernal jealousy at every quiet spirit, at every penitential tear, at every rapture of joy, at every expression of thankfulness and inwardly grudge every token for good, every savoury morsel, every drop of honey, and every sweet word, that savours of truth, peace, and righteousness; but, notwithstanding all their grudging, and dissatisfaction, the kind invitation and hearty welcome reaches to all the friends of the bridegroom, and none else. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Persons who are in union with the Saviour, find help in every kind of trouble; while the worldling, when his earthly god is gone, and the hypocrite, when his sandy foundation and vain confidence give way, are obliged to fly (like Judas) to a dumb dog, or go (like Saul) to the witch of Endor, or (like Demas) to the world, or (like Ahithophel) to the hater, or (like Alexander) to the blasphemers of Christ, or (like the sons of Sceva the Jew) into the madness or distraction of Satan, or else (like the foolish virgins) to buy oil of the wise when fearfulness surprises the hypocrites; but Zion comes up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, whose strength is made perfect in her weakness. "Zion shall never be moved; God is in the midst of her; God shall help her, and that right early."

The hypocrite may walk with the righteous, as Ahithophel walked with David, to the house of God in company; and such may go to and fro to the place of the holy, and be "forgotten in the city where they had so done." But Zion, like Enoch and Noah, walks with God; she shall never be forgotten. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

The believer knows that the government of both the church and the world is laid upon Christ's shoulders, who lends his friendly aid to those that trust in him in every time of need; and, when they are pressed beyond measure, insomuch that they despair even of life, they have "the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." Such souls cast their burdens on the Lord, and pour out their soul before him, who "gives power to the saint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength;" Thus, when two walk together, if one fall, the other "will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to lift him up."

Furthermore, the soul that is in union with the Saviour is often alarmed, warned, and previously cautioned, of approaching dangers, while the judgments of God are far above out of the sight of the wicked. "A wise man discerns both time and judgment, he foresees the evil, and bides himself; when the wicked pass on, and are punished." "When he the Comforter is come, he will guide you into all truth, and he shall shew you things to come;" but the wicked cry, "Peace and safety," when sudden destruction cometh.

Souls in union with Christ daily correspond with each other. They talk to him in confession, in prayer, in praise, in meditation, and in thanksgiving; and he talks to them in his word, upon their hearts, in providences, by the cross, by internal changes of heart, or by some evident token for good. But the bond child and the hypocrite have no familiarity with Christ, no access to him, nor intercourse with him. All their talk is not to God, but to be heard of men; to seek honour from them, and to set themselves up in the affections of the simple, as rivals to God; which is a prelude to their ruin; for they that exalt themselves shall be abased, but those that humble themselves shall be exalted.

The soul that is in union and friendship with Christ cannot bear any distance, coldness, frown, shyness, or controversy, with him. This is worse to them than death itself, esteeming, his favour better than life, and the words of his mouth more than their necessary food; hence the following complaints - "Why bidest thou thy face from me?" "Shew me the reason wherefore thou contendest with me." "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." "The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me." "O Lord, why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, why shouldest thou be as a wayfaring man that turneth aside and tarrieth but for a night; O when will thou come and comfort me?"

But the mystical courtship and love visits that pass between Christ and his spouse; the little fits of jealousy and provocations to it; the trial of each other's affections, and the sifting of each other's sincere intentions to the bottom; the restlessness, while one doubt or suspicion remains; and the racking anxiety, till every thing be settled upon a sure, honourable, and lasting, foundation, to the satisfaction of each party; is all a riddle to the formalist and to the hypocrite. The whole work of such lies in their head; thinking, passes for believing, presumption for the assurance of faith, an external reformation is called conversion to God, legal bondage goes for the workings of the old man, the checks of an honest conscience is called the temptations of Satan, and being buffeted for their faults is being persecuted for righteousness sake; the preacher, who preaches to sap such a sandy foundation, is one that makes the heart of the righteous sad; while he that bears them slightly, and prophesies smooth things, is a builder up; and he that cries, "Peace, peace," where God has not spoken peace, is a man of candour, a man of a sweet and excellent spirit. This is the rest and security of an hypocrite, and hard work he has to keep things together; scripture, conscience, and every experimental and discerning child of God, are against him, and are continually making breaches in this supposed rest and refuse. The soul and Christ, who are in sweet union together, have a tender feeling for each other, and a tender regard for each other's honour. The sufferings of Christ often fill such a soul with cutting, grief and contrition; and all that touch such a believer, saith the Lord, shall offend. Such souls cannot endure to see or bear the Lord slightly or evil spoken of. "I hate them that hate thee," saith the Psalmist; and "they that hate Zion shall be desolate," saith the Saviour. They care not how lightly themselves are esteemed, so as their Lord is glorified; and the Lord is as much concerned for the honour of them. "They that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

"But not so the hypocrite; he pays no record to the honour of God, so as he can but exalt himself in the eyes of men. They that cleave to him, admire him, and listen with astonishment to the uncertain sound of his trumpet, however evil in life and empty in heart, are his best Friends; but all that are enlightened to see his deception are the worst enemies he has; nor will he go to the wise, nor to him that reproves him; he hates the light, and that is his condemnation.

Furthermore Christ and his church are not only united in the bond of the covenant, and in mutual affections, but they are of one judgment. What he reveals, they consent to; what he says, they credit; what he applies, they embrace; what he speaks to them, the Spirit seals on them; and they set their hand, and bear their testimony, to his seal that God is true. The seal is a confirming assurance, and their setting to their seal is their honest confession of what they feel and enjoy. This faith gives glory to the Lord; and thus to believe is the saint's glory and wisdom. To be wise above what is written is devilish or infernal wisdom; to disbelieve or contradict truth, is to make God a liar, and charge infinite wisdom with ignorance, and to debase him to a level with Satan, than which nothing, can be more vile and damnable. From this perilous path the fear of God keeps the saints. What they have seen in the Lord's light they testify; what they have heard from him they proclaim upon the house top; what they have felt they declare; and what is undiscovered they pray and wait for; but what is not revealed they dare not enter into and what is not discovered to them they will not decide upon, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, and their dear-Lord be dishonoured. All that an heretic draws out of the mouth of a child of God is sure to be pondered over in secret, and his lips are kissed when a right answer has been given.

O happy soul that is thus united to, and humbly walks with, his Saviour. The Lord guides him by his blessed Spirit, his eye,

and his unerring counsel; while faith observes his motions and directions, and treads in his steps.

He plants his fear in his heart; and the believer walks, as in his immediate presence, before him in love; and considers himself under the eye of his everlasting friend, who ponders all his goings.

He feels a bar of equity erected in his own heart; to which, upon every recollection of misdoing, he cites himself; and will hold himself guilty, and culpable, till acquitted by the Spirit of God and his own conscience, and enlarged by a manifestation of pardoning love and the soul-humbling smile of his Saviour and his Judge.

The Lord daily proclaims his name to him, and causes all his goodness to pass before him; while the believer follows after and observes his wondrous ways, the work of his hands, the readings of his providence, the communications of his grace, and the inward motions of his Spirit. "He that will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving, ñ kindness of the Lord."

The eye of faith discerns the narrow path; and, by the inward guidance of the Spirit, he shuns the rocks of error, the stumbling blocks and stumbling stones, where thousands dash and fall: he sees a harmony in the scriptures of truth, and a sweet harmony in the attributes 2000 of God, and in the glorious work of each person in the Godhead. A heavenly ray discovers the ancient footsteps of the flock, and big path shines more and more unto perfect day.

While he walks humbly by faith, he finds himself sensibly, upheld by a free spirit; the omnipresence of his blessed Lord encompasses him about as with a shield, which lifts his soul above the shackles of legal bondage, and rescues his mind from the gloomy regions of the shadow of death, and from the

melancholy meditations of terror; "he dwells on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure; thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, and behold the land which is very far off."

The dear Lord often condescends to pay such humble souls his love visits: he sometimes meets them in their thoughts, and speaks upon their hearts; sometimes he meets them in his word, and makes them feel all that he says; meets them in their lawful calling, and puts his blessing on the work of their hands; meets them in their difficulties, and makes crooked things straight; meets them in his house of prayer, and gives them sometimes a reproof, and sometimes a promise. Thus the Almighty is with them, and his visitations preserve their spirits. "I will bear thee, saith the Lord, from the belly, and from the womb, and to your old age I am he, and to hoary hairs will I carry you."

Christian reader, cleave thou to thy God, and shun the path of the destroyer; stand not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor meddle with them that are given to change. Novelty suits an itching ear; but a circumcised ear will not give heed to a naughty tongue, nor will the unctuous heart be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. "Cease, my son, to hear, the instruction that causes thee to err from the words [and ways] of wisdom." "Stolen waters are sweet" to a proud stomach, and "bread of deceit is pleasant" to the palate of those who carry the poison of asps under their lips; but in the day of temptation his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

I charged Mr. Loud, when with me, with having written some books, and of his intention to publish them, and with his having endeavoured to circulate his heresies to the injury of some of the weaklings in faith. All which he denied. But I am informed that he is now determined to publish them, if he pawns his clothes to do it. This shews that he will not stick at

a lie. However, I must leave him where God has left him ñ to the perverseness of his own will, and the hardness of his own heart. He may serve as a fan, to blow away a little chaff from the floor, which we shall not be sorry for; and he may leave a testimony against his own soul; and the Judge of all the earth, who takes the wise in their own craftiness, may judge him out of his own mouth; but he shall never finally deceive one of God's elect. False doctrines, which are called the deceivableness of unrighteousness, never work effectually, only in them that perish. No soul shall embrace, hold fast, and go down to the grave with, his lies in their hand, but those "that were of old ordained to this condemnation." And I would advise him to send out his *system* as compact, and as closely put together, as possible; or else it is ten to one but the King, of Zion, who teaches Judah the use of the bow, will furnish me with some arrows from his quiver that will make a way through all the joints of his harness. "He that loveth and maketh *lies*" should have a strong memory; and every lie must be well swaddled, and well varnished, or else truth will discover it. And let Mr. Loud take care never to mention the words *Son of man* as applicable to Christ, for the Godhead of Christ is the Father of all men by creation; all things were made by him." But the father of all creatures can be the offspring of no creature. Neither divinity abstractedly considered, nor divinity incarnate, is the son of man, or son of David, but David's Lord. No, nor even divinity transubstantiated into flesh and blood, according to Loud's notion, can ever be the fruit of David's loins; because, according to his tenet, the Godhead was changed into flesh in the virgin's womb, and took no more of her nature than his handkerchief. According, to this, it never was in David's loins; consequently could never be a fruit that sprung from his body; for there was nothing of his body, or from his loins, in it. And by this doctrine what becomes of the oath of God? Psalm cxxxii 11. But the human nature of Christ was once in the loins of Adam, and once in the womb of Eve, and in the loins of forty-two ancients from Abraham to Mary;

for all these, touching his human nature, were his ancestors and his fathers; of whom, as concerning the flesh, he came. But these fathers, who obtained such favour as to be the ancestors of such a wonderful and mysterious offspring, Must now, in point of conversation, give way to the numerous offspring of their Son whose children are much more talked of in the New Testament than the fathers are in the old; as it is written, "Instead of thy fathers, shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever," Psalm xlv. 16, 17.

Reader, fare thee well. Peace and truth be with thee. May God the Holy Ghost, our teacher, guide, and comforter, in our pilgrimage, bless this testimony to thy souls profit; which I believe to be a true testimony, and a testimony that will not be easily contradicted; and which will never be overthrown by arguments drawn from the word of God. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men." Amen and amen.

W. HUNTINGTON, S.S.

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

Sunday, January 5, 1794.

Brother in the Lord,

I THANK my God for the grace given unto you, in that you are enabled in a measure to make a bold defence in behalf of the truth; also to divide the same *according to the proportion of faith contained in the word of truth.*

This morning I was comforted in beholding your steadfastness and order in your discourse. I looked pretty close at your steps. I saw that they were toward the highway. I do not remember of any dangerous turning you took in that sermon. You gave a good description of *the countries I have passed through*, corresponding, with my *own records thereof*.

I heard you on Tuesday evening last at Monkwell-street. You seemed to be favoured with great enlargement of heart, and fervour of spirit; but there was one thing you advanced that I cannot agree with - that *rod* and *sceptre* in scripture have the same meaning, is a thing which no man can *solder together*, *let him blow the coals and smite the anvil as long as he will*. For I have passed under the rod before I was brought under the bond of the covenant. The rod is for the fool's back; and those that are not favoured with a touch of the sceptre, the rod will break in pieces, because they were not made wise and teachable; and, because they kissed not the Son, in his wrath they perish from the way of touching the sceptre of his kingdom for ever; and those his enemies his rod is heavy upon them. Blessed be the King for his mercy, that endureth for ever.

Yours for the truth's sake,
JOHN WALKER.
Great Arthur-street, Goswell-street.

TO JOHN WALKER.

Dear Sir,

Grace and truth be with thee, and with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. I received yours; and hope ever to be thankful to God for enabling me to speak so as to agree with the Sp 2000 irit's testimony in the hearts of any of his children; which, in part, you seem to acknowledge. But you must allow that the best of men, more especially the

worst, are but fallible creatures, though the Spirit of God is an infallible Spirit. The Psalmist, who declared that he had more understanding than his teachers, in humility asks, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." It was in God's light that he saw light; but, if God withdrew his rays, he cries, "I am a stranger with thee; hide not thy commandment from me." It is more easy to hear a sermon, Sir, than it is to deliver one; nor does it require half the labour and wisdom to find fault with a discourse, than it does to put a good one together. No man (much less Wisdom's children) is to make a man an offender for a word, nor to lie in wait for him that reproveth in the gate. Many a hearer has made a sad handle of one blunder in a discourse; whereas, had he himself been in the pulpit, he would, in all probability, have made an hundred. For my part, I would sooner preach before an hundred men *really wise*, than before one man that thinks himself so. Hearers are no more infallible than preachers; and more frequently err in finding fault than the Lord's servants do in preaching. If God sets an eye in the body mystical, he generally shines so in him as to give light to all that are in the house; and what he sees that he declares, while many in the house may think he is wrong, because themselves are not right; and find fault with what they do not understand; and this, Sir, is your case. The very one thing, that you cannot agree with me in, is what all the scriptures do agree to declare; and what you say no man can solder together, is put together by God himself, without any human soldering. If you have passed under the rod into the bond of the covenant, it is well for you; but I should suppose it is but lately; if otherwise, I fear you have too often played truant, instead of sitting humbly at the Lord's feet, and receiving his words; for it is evident that humility and wisdom are much wanting in your letter. Pride and ignorance are no proofs of divine teaching; these materials are from the ruins of the fall, not from the covenant of grace.

A *sceptre* Sir, in the literal sense, is a short staff, or small rod, carried in the hand of a royal sovereign, which is a sign or emblem of royal power and authority, granted by the King, of kings and Lord of lords, by whom kings reign; and it is put into the hands of a king by the nation that sets him as a ruler over them.

But, if this *sceptre*, this power and authority, was to extend no farther than just to be held out at the palace to an humble petitioner, who solicits a favour, it would be a sceptre of mercy with a witness, but not a sceptre of righteousness; for we should soon be overrun and destroyed by thieves, villains, and murderers, and no man would be sure of his life; "A king all mercy is a king, unjust." The authority of a ruler is to promote good works and to be a terror to evil; to do good, is to have praise of the same; but, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sceptre nor the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil, Rom. xiii. 3, 4. But without a sceptre he hath no authority. What you mean by being favoured with a touch of the sceptre, I do not understand, and it is what you cannot explain. Queen Esther touched the sceptre of king Ahasuerus. This I know; but the sceptre of Christ is neither wood, gold, nor iron; it was not made by the *turner*, the *goldsmith*, nor upon the *blacksmith's anvil*; for it is no less than Almighty power, which is not to be touched with the finger, but felt in the soul; nor is it in our power to handle it, it must be manifested in us by the Lord himself. Nor is this power of the mediatorial King confined to the objects of his love, but it extends to all his enemies. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh," to subdue them, and make all things subservient to his own end; and for this reason, "that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him." This power reaches to all - to all the angels in heaven, and to all the devils in hell; to all the saints in Zion, and to all the sinners on earth. He is the head of all principalities, and

has the keys of hell and of death. He is King of glory in heaven, King of saints in Zion, and King of nations, as well as King of kings and Lord of all lords. And it is under this rod of his strength that the rebel passes, who is made willing, in the day of his power; and by the same rod of his mouth he smites the earth, slays the wicked, and breaks in pieces the oppressor. If this kind tutor of mine had examined the word of God, he might have learned from thence that God calls a rod a sceptre more than once. "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation," Ezek. xix. 11, 14. And what is called the rod of Christ's strength, which went out of Zion, is said to be the rod by which he rules in the midst of his enemies, and by which he makes his own people willing to submit to his government, Psalm cx. 1, 2, 3. And this ruling rod is called his sceptre; and it is a right sceptre, and a sceptre of righteousness, which well becomes him who loves righteousness and hates wickedness, and who will reward the one and destroy the other. All this is to be learned from the Bible: but finding fault in company sometimes brings more honour, from men, than reading or praying over the scriptures in private, where there are no lookers-on but God and conscience: for young men, or green disciples, who can dissect the sermons of old labourers in the vineyard, are often looked up to as men of wisdom, judgement, and discernment; men of deep experience and super abounding grace: and are often extolled, and their company much courted; which is a feast of fat things to those that are not aware of the foot of pride. It is the Lord's sceptre that makes the gospel a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. His authority is to dispense both mercy and judgement; and not only to rule in time, but to judge both quick and dead at last. With this rod he smites through the proud, and with the same he reproveth with equity for the meek of the earth. The rod that you say you

have passed under, and the rod upon the fool's back, is one and the same thing, both in English and in Hebrew, and signifies no less than the sceptre of a ruler. He that is invested with authority to humble a rebel, and to protect a wise man, uses the same authority in correcting a fool. What countries you have passed through, and what are your records thereof, I cannot tell: but, if your journal is as unintelligible as your notions of a sceptre, no person will ever understand it, nor will you ever be able to explain it. If you *have*, as you say, been brought under the bond of the covenant, I much question whether you was ever brought *into* it. Those who are humbled to lie down at the feet of the Lamb, and made teachable and tractable to receive their instructions at the mouth of the Saviour, and to be led by him, are swift to hear and slow to speak; more ready to take the lowest than the highest seat, and more fond of being instructed than to instruct others. God knows that no man is sufficient of himself for the work of the ministry, and therefore promises that his Spirit shall speak in them; and, when this is the case, it is not every novice that can condemn the speech. What you call dividing truth "according to the proportion of faith contained in the word of truth is altogether without either sense or meaning. Your records of the country are little better. And to talk of soldering rod and sceptre together, by 2000 blowing the coals and smiting the anvil, is ignorance, insolence, arrogance, and wickedness. For, though the Almighty pours contempt upon the carpenter and smith, who used to labour at the anvil and the solder, in making an image or a god, yet the omnipotent power and authority of Christ is not to be trifled with, nor yet to be compared to the work of men's hands, graven by art and man's device. For my part, I have been burdened with so much instruction of this sort, and so little has been added to me by this kind of conference, that I could almost wish in my heart that, if they cannot help me, they would not hinder me. And, as a friend, I would advise this kind tutor of mine to begin with Nehemiah's burden-bearers, and get away a little of his

own rubbish, Neh. iv. 10; and to learn to temper his mortar, and to make clear work at the dung-gate, Neh. iii. 13, before he lifts up his trowel in the temple: or (in other words) that he wait till his understanding is more clear, his judgment better informed, the old vail of the heart a little more removed, and until the stream of truth runs a little more pure, before he attempts to instruct or polish the Lord's labourers; for it is not likely that he should pull a mote out of my eye while I can see two beams in his. This instruction is sent to my instructor by his soul's well-wisher,

Wm. HUNTINGTON.
Church Street, Paddington.

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Sir,

I hope you will excuse my liberty of writing to you; for I feel myself in duty bound to bless the Lord for his Goodness and loving-kindness in directing my steps to Providence chapel; where I have had, under your ministry, by God's blessing, many sweet entertainments; yea, many doubts and fears have been removed, and many points of scriptural doctrine cleared up; as, for instance, *election*, as one of the grandest truths in all the Bible; against which I have in times past fought like a devil, for I was all for *universal redemption*. But now I am, through grace, persuaded that, if I have no part nor lot in special redemption (which I humbly hope and trust I have), I should then never expect to be saved at all; for, without an interest in Christ by free grace, it is impossible that any man can be happy, either in time or eternity. And, with respect to God's holy law and its demands, I have worked in a legal way at that for years, but all to no purpose; for it requires perfect obedience, internal as well as external; to which standard I could never attain, nor no one living ever will; for Christ Jesus

is the end of the law for righteousness: and until he is pleased, in his rich mercy, to shew us his free salvation (O precious word! free salvation without money and without price!) we keep stumbling upon the dark mountains, and go from bad to worse. To-day the Lord has been pleased to shew me another error, which I have been taught, and believed for many years; namely, that Christ descended into hell after his crucifixion; either to shew himself as a conqueror to his enemies, or else to preach the gospel to the souls that were in prison, which did not believe in the time of Noah. But, if I now understand the text right, the Spirit preached to them, in and by Noah, when yet upon earth, before the destruction of the old world. Furthermore, concerning the incarnation of our blessed Lord and Saviour. I am sure I never had so clear a view of it before, as when you described it, and the Lord directed it to my heart, this day. How he took our nature into union with his Godhead, and how Gloriously every thing, under the old dispensation prefigured Christ's manhood; namely, the tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterwards the temple which Solomon built, where the Lord dwelt.

I must own I wished in my Heart that that sermon might be printed, for the good of others as well as myself; for my memory is very shallow; yet what the Spirit of God writes in the inmost parts of the soul can never be erase, though all the devils in hell were to try at it; for he that is in us is stronger than be that is in the world. Blessed be his name, he says he will never leave us nor forsake us, world without end. Amen.

Now, my dear Sir, I beg once more that you will pardon my freedom, and excuse my blunders, considering that I am a foreigner *in a two-fold sense*; and, if you think it worthy an answer, I shall esteem it a great favour; if not, I hope the Lord will enable me to bear it patiently, and with Christian fortitude for without him I can do nothing: but, through him and his grace, we are enabled to do every thing he requires of us.

Although I am not worthy of the least of his blessings, yet for his sake who has loved me, and given himself for me, I expect every needful blessing; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the one self-existent Jehovah, be all glory and honour for ever and ever.

I remain yours, with esteem, in the bond of peace.

Fedde Fixsen

Great St. Ann's street, Westminster, Dec, 25, 1793.

TO FEDDE FIXSEN.

Dear Sir,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, and bless God for condescending to make me useful to you, or to any other of his children. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The work is the Lord's, and he will work in whom and by whom he pleases. Every preacher that Gods sends has all his work lined out before him), and no man shall do it but the instrument that God has appointed. Peter must go to Cornelius, Paul to help them of Macedonia, and Philip to the Ethiopian; and perhaps he has appointed me to clear away a little of your rubbish, that you may make a better joint than you ever yet have done with the chief corner stone.

There are few of the Lord's chosen but who, at their first awakening, and when under legal convictions, wage war, and spend the shafts of their natural enmity and rebellion, at the doctrine of God's *election*, which is a terrible obstacle in the way of self sufficiency and human consequence. It is a mountain of brass, Zech. vi. 1, which proud nature cannot submit to, which freewill cannot surmount, and which malice itself cannot remove. It divests poor mortals of all their

supposed sovereignty, baffles free agency itself, and renders the hand of the proud doer incapable of contributing the least mite to the work of the Most High, which from all eternity was finished in the decree and purpose of God, Heb. iv. 3. It tells us that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, not yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: so far from it, it is the lame that take the prey, the weak are strong, and he that becomes a fool is wise. All which is contrary to reason, and is to them that perish foolishness. God will stain the pride of all human glory, by hiding his mysteries from the wise and prudent, that those who profess themselves wise may become fools, vain in their imaginations, until their foolish hearts are darkened.

Universal redemption must be held by those professors who are conscious to themselves that the redemption price has never been applied to them, or else they must exclude themselves from all redemption touching experience: which true and honest confession of exclusion would at once render their profession empty, and debase them to a level with the world; which those can never brook who are left to seek honour one of another; so far from it, they are almost ready to blaspheme the God of heaven, when he discovers the hypocrisy of their hearts, by shewing their wickedness openly before the confederation. Saul will call for honour before the people, even when given up of God to a reprobate mind, and to a fearful looking for of judgement; which 2000 h shews that neither the invasions of wrath in this world, nor the torments of hell in the next, will ever humble proud nature; witness the pride and obstinacy of devils, who have been long disciplined with the cords of their sins and the terrors of God (which is the only experience of Arminians), and yet remain just the same, and ever will.

Working at the precepts of the law is the common task of us all, until the Lord begin to work in us, for by nature we know no other way of life. The way of faith is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close even from the fowls of heaven, Job. xxviii. 21, till God discovers it; of course the awakened mind will turn his feet to the testimonies, and make haste to keep the commandments. This is the only way that seemeth right unto a man Prov. xiv. 12, till he is taught better. The law shews a man his sin, and works death in him by its own goodness; and, if he follows his work closely, it will sooner or later, shew him his weakness, condemn him for his partial performances, and there leave him: and numbers who stick here, and go no farther, pass with many preachers in our days for humble souls, and blessed recipients of grace. Preachers who have not the Spirit, must deal in the letter; and those, who cannot handle the mystery, must work at the precepts; which the unhumbled heart is fond of, as it does not, in the eyes of the blind, exclude boasting, which faith does. He that puts on the outside, the most shining varnish, is sure to tell his neighbour to stand by himself, for he is holier than he; and every one that can perform a double task of dead works is licensed, as he thinks, to have a throw at the publican. And this is easily accounted for, because to this day the vail is on the heart of all Moses's disciples; and, while they are kept looking through that curtain, darkness appears to be light, and light darkness; evil to be good, and good evil, Isa. v. 20. Every thing on their own side of the vail is a prize, but every thing on the other side a blank. Peter says they cannot see afar off. They can see a mote in another, while they cannot see a beam in themselves; and strain their jaws at a gnat, yet swallow a camel imperceptibly. It was through this vail the Samaritans looked when they set up their own judgment, and called Simon Magus the great power of God. And the Jewish scribes did the same when they called the divine master Beelzebub, and a fellow; but themselves Moses's disciples: a sufficient proof that the vail hung heavy upon them; they were

wise and prudent in their own eyes, but their foolish hearts were darkened. They knew not the day of their visitation, they could not discern the sins of the times; and so the mysteries of the kingdom, and the things which made for their peace, were hid from their eyes. And this is the case with too many in a profession in our day; a formal round of duties, a decent deportment, legal and partial obedience, and eye service, (which are all dead works) are rested in, and trusted to, instead of the merits of Christ and the renewing operations of the Holy Ghost. But O, Sir, the wild olive branch must bear wild fruit until engrafted into the good olive tree: this branch can have neither life nor fruit till it partake of the goodness and fatness of the ever blessed tree of oil. The soul that is delivered from the law, and united to Christ, who is under the dominion of grace, influenced and actuated by the holy Spirit of promise, shall never be barren, nor fruitless; the faithfulness of God is engaged to keep his leaf green, and his soul shall never cease from yielding fruit.

That article of faith, called *our Lord's descension into hell*, never had any footing or foundation in God's book. The human nature dying, in union with the Godhead, must answer every infinite demand, both of law and justice; the human nature of Christ being, set up (in the purpose of God) from everlasting and ordained to everlasting glory, and the union of it to eternal divinity in Christ's death, must be sufficient to redeem the elect from eternal damnation. And it was done; we are justified from all demands of vindictive justice by his blood, and by the same are we ransomed both from wrath and the grave. The fabled limbo, called purgatory, stands upon our Lord's descension into hell; which has wrought wonderfully in the minds of thousands, whose eyes the god of this world has been permitted to blind, so as to keep the light of the gospel from them; this has furnished his *holiness* with one of his keys; this scarecrow has frightened many a miser out of his cash when in dying circumstances; it employs the

innumerable company of mass-mongers, in labouring to change the immutable mind of God - to revoke his irrevocable decree - to remove his immoveable gulf - and to alter the unalterable state of the dead: nevertheless, this labour in vain has not been vain labour; a mint of money has been given and taken in order to obtain a permit and passport from *purgatory*, which has brought no small gain to the craftsmen of that occupation.

Hell, or *scheol*, in scripture very frequently means the grave, as in Gen. xxxvii. 35; xlii. 38; and in most places where it is simply and singly mentioned: but, where the place and state of the damned is intended, something is frequently added to distinguish it; as, (for instance) "Her guests are in the *depths* of hell;" Prov. ix. 18. "Hell and *destruction* are before the eyes of the Lord;" Prov. xv. 11. "Mine anger shall burn to the *lowest hell*." "It is *deeper* than hell; what canst thou know Job. xi. 8. Hell is naked before him, and *destruction* hath no covering." "O hell, where is thy victory?" "Shall be in danger of *hell fire*," Matt. v. 22. "*Destroy* soul and body in hell," Luke, xii. 5. "How can you escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 33. In all these passages of scripture the place of the damned is plainly pointed out; but, where the word hell is applied to Christ, (as in Psalm xvi. 10; and Acts, ii. 27) the grave, and not the bottomless pit, is meant. And, if it be objected that the soul, and not the *body*, is mentioned, ("Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," &c.) it may be answered, that the soul often intends the whole of his human nature. When it is said, he shall "make his soul an offering, for sin," "He shall see of the travail of his soul," and "because he poured out his soul unto death," &c. Isai. liii. 10, 11, 12. All these expressions mean the whole manhood; for the body must not, cannot, be separated or excluded from the sacrifice, which is called "a lamb without spot," and by the blood of which the church is said to be purchased and redeemed. When it is said that Abraham took all the souls that he had gotten in Haran, Gen. xii. 5, not *souls*

only, but *persons*, are meant. And sometimes the soul is mentioned when the body is meant, as in Psalm xlix. 15. 11. "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me." And again, "For great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest *grave*," (for so the margin reads) Psalm lxxxvi. 13. Hence it appears plain that, when it is said "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," the whole human nature in union with the Godhead is intended, which the last clause of the text explains, by saying, "nor suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption." And, if it be objected that the soul of Christ, excluded from the body, is meant, and nothing else; then let such objectors explain to us in what sense the body, thus abstractedly considered, can be called the HOLY ONE, as Adam's body in innocency was a true figure of it; and seeing, also that the body is no more than one half, yea, the weakest, lowest, and meanest part of the manhood, which had its original from the earth; but the soul's original is 18b3 from God. Earth is the mother of the body, but God the Father of spirits. Hence it is plain that the soul in that text includes the whole of Christ, which the phrase *Holy One* explains; and who never was in hell, nor left in the state of the dead; but by his death destroyed "him that had the power of death; that is, the devil;" and who is Lord both of life and death, and has the keys of both; which keys were not fetched from hell, but laid upon him by God the Father. "All power is given to me, both in heaven and earth. I have the keys of hell and of death" ñ of hell, as the judge of angels and men and of death, as the resurrection and the life. The damned spirits in hell, and the dust in the tomb, shall hear his voice, and come forth.

You inform me that you are a foreigner in a twofold sense. If a Foreigner from a distant country, all the better; you have the less acquaintance to ensnare you; and, if a foreigner in the best sense you are one born from above, a native of the heavenly Jerusalem, and are a stranger in a strange land;

and, if a partaker of grace, (with respect to God and Zion) you are well known; and no more (in this sense) a stranger or foreigner, but "a fellow citizen of the saints, and of the household of God."

While the good work of God is going on in your soul, cleave close to him, and shun all acquaintance. The formal professor will damp our zeal; the legalist will fetter and shackle you; the erroneous will puzzle and baffle your judgment; the presumptuous hypocrite will harden and impiously embolden you; the backslider in heart will envy your happiness, and unjustly smite you; while the man of gifts, (who is destitute of grace) will nurse your pride, and puff you up.

In this little treatise my dear friend may see something of the reality, the truth, and effects, of the doctrine of election, which he so much despised. You confess that God hath delivered you from that pharisaical notion, of believers being under the law as the rule of life, and from all the fruitless toil of the eye servant and the bond slave: and I have no doubt but thy soul is more humble, thy conscience more tender, and that more genuine fruits are brought forth to the glory of God's grace by you now than ever have been heretofore.

You are convinced also of the error of our Lord's descent into hell; and are led to see, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the blessed incarnation of Christ, and to rejoice in it. While, at the same time, in this little work, you may see a man, that has sat under the same ministry for years, and not a foreigner, like yourself, but an Englishman, who hold's fast all the deceit which God's grace has made you let go. Thus the Spirit leads one into all truth, while the other has a bridle in his jaws, causing him to err. The first is last, and the last first. He in the highest seat with shame gives place, and takes the lowest room; while the humble and teachable soul is bid to go up higher in the presence of the Prince. The talents are taken

from the graceless, and given to the gracious, who has more abundance; while the empty professor is deprived of what he had, and walks naked, insomuch that the simple, who once admired him, see his name. While one builds upon the rock, and blesses both the founder and the foundation, the other makes it "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." The verdant professor, or green tree, is dried up, and the dry tree is made to flourish. One bears clusters, with a blessing in them; another bitter clusters, with gall and wormwood; and both under the same sun. But so it is, and so it shall be till harvest. Judas must be discovered, and go out, that Matthias may succeed him. Vashti must be deposed, that Esther (a better than she) may be exalted. Haman must be gibbeted at his own expense, that Mordecai might go from the gate to the treasury, and from his sackcloth to royal apparel. Mr. Loud must get into Satan's strong hold, while Fixsen, who sat in the prison-house, must go forth and shew himself. Thus it must be done to those "whom the King delighteth to honour." And I bless God for every discovery he makes of an hypocrite, and I bless him for every soul in whose conscience he makes me manifest. A preacher is sent to root up as well as to plant; to throw down as well as to build. And, while God uses me to separate the vile from the precious, and the chaff from the wheat, I shall be as God's mouth. "And who is sufficient for these things?" Our sufficiency is of God." And where shall we solve these things? Not in freewill. Mr. Loud wills to be great, and you to be little; he to be wise, and you to be foolish, that you may be wise; he seeks honour from men, you the honour from God; he wishes to divide and scatter, and you to unite and gather; he hates the light, and shuns it, and you come to it; he reviles me for telling the truth, while the truth makes you free; he is, and will be, disappointed; and you do, and will, find what you never expected. And so "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." And here we are obliged to trace these things up to their

proper basis; resolve them, settle them, and leave them, on the absolute, sovereign, and uncontrollable will of God, who will do as he pleases with his own. To believe in, humbly to acquiesce with, and to submit to, the sovereign and good will of God in Christ Jesus, is the highest act of a saint's obedience. But he that kicks, rebels, and resists his revealed will, and impiously disputes against it, does the work of a devil and a rebel. But God has made us willing in the day of his power, and Christ "has received gifts for the rebellions, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

The Lord Jesus Christ be thy prophet, thy priest, thy king, and thy sole director; and blessed shalt thou then be, and it shall be well with thee. Grace and peace with thee.

Ever thine,
Wm. HUNTINGTON.