AN ESSAY
To State the
SCRIPTURE-ACCOUNT
OF
MAN'S REDEMPTION,
BY THE
DEATH of CHRIST,
WHEREIN
The Doctrine is shewn to be as plain
and INTELLIGIBLE, as it is USEFUL and
IMPORTANT.

Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. Hab. ii. 2.
—And the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the Life of the world. John vi. 51.
—God's grace — is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel. 2 Tim. i. 10.

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Short Instructions to the Reader.

The numberless volumes which have been wrote on the subject of man's redemption, will be a vindication, or apology for the publication of this short treatise. Especially, if it should be found to have rendered those bulky performances useless. Many enquiring persons have been dissatisfied with what has been heretofore written on the subject: and if this should contribute to give the rational and impartial Examiner any satisfaction, a desirable end will be obtained.

All such who read the following Essay, may easily perceive, that it is formed upon no human scheme whatsoever; and that the author of it has paid no regard to any one of the fallible systems; no, not to those which are under the venerable name of orthodox.

He has kept as close a regard to the revelation as he was able: and hath had no manner of temptation to depart, in the least tittle, from what has appeared to him to be the doctrine of it. The reason of his not collecting all the texts, on the subject, was, he thought that a few of the strongest expressions clearly reconciled, would be a sufficient specimen; and prevent too great an enlargement of the Essay. Brevity must become a plain subject. The author has chosen to conceal his name, for several reasons.—Nevertheless, in his religious enquiries, he courts no man's favour, nor is in fear of any man's displeasure. This, he reckons more
than needful to answer those questions, who is he? and what is he? Nor will a mind form'd by Truth, think it of any moment, whether he be a Conformist, or a Non-conformist; a North, or a South Briton, or of Hibernian extract. Truth is truth, tho' it should drop from the Pen of a Turk! and be who gives truth the most generous reception, will make her welcome, tho' in the garb of a Barbarian-Stranger. He could have made some inferences, which would have much concerned the conduct of Christian men towards one another: but he has chosen to omit an application, which is the duty of every man to make for himself: being assured, that if men are honest, and in earnest Christians, they will not fail to make those reflexions upon themselves that a mistaken and enflamed zeal has made salutary and needful. Only one such inference he cannot forbear; and that is, the amazing insolence of those writers, who brand with heretical names, any such, who think differently from them on the doctrine of redemption: yea, even presume to unchristianize those who receive it not in the dress of such an age, or in the shape of such a party! when, at the same time, no man can have any worthy ideas of the doctrine, who has not formed them by the light of revelation, since it is a doctrine of pure revelation. And if every man is to judge for himself of the doctrines of revelation, who shall be able to sit in judgment upon him, but the final judge?—Break thro' this right of private judgment, and defend Protestantism if you are able.
THE

Doctrine of Redemption, plain and intelligible, as important, &c.

S E C T. I.

THE variety or diversity of opinion, which men have invented about the Death of Jesus Christ, must have been owing chiefly to the not confining of the attention to the New Testament doctrine, and to the want of comparing carefully the several representations which are therein given of its design or intention.

This truly must be the state of the case, forasmuch as it is there described as an event in which all men are concerned: and therefore must be a plain and clear doctrine in proportion to the importance of it. To suppose any doctrine obscure that concerns mankind, in the last and most complete revelation of the mind and will of God, is to reflect great dishonour upon it, and upon the wisdom and grace of the Revealer. In former dispensations it might be expected, that we should find prophecies relating to the last, which had some obscurity; and only vanished upon the accomplishment of them. Hence it is, that one of the New Testament writers, upon taking a review of the virtuous influence that prior revelations had had upon good men, yet adds, that they had not received the
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the promise, or seen it in its most clear and extensive point of view, God having provided, or foreseen some better Thing for us; that they without us should not be made perfect. *Heb. xi.* 39, 40. Hence Christians are said, with open face, to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord! the eye has the utmost assistance given it, that this state will admit of. And of the perspicuity of this revelation; mention is made in antient prophecy; the way-faring-men, tho' Fools, that is, persons either of very small natural capacity, or persons who had been, foolish, disobedient, and deceived, under the corruptions of natural or revealed religion; men, tho' fools, should not err. And that such should be the increase of light, and the means of knowledge, that all men should know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

Accordingly, when the blessed Jesus addresses the Jews, in a manner that intends to shew the benefit which his doctrine was calculated to impart to men, he calls it, the light! Light is come into the world. And that he was the way, and the truth, and the life.

Thus evident is it, that if we allow the New Testament Writings to be the last and finished revelation of the mind and will of God, concerning man in this state, or that will be made to him during this state, it will follow, that there can be no obscurity in any of its doctrines, in which the present instruction of man is concerned. But the death of Jesus Christ is often represented
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represented as an event in which man has an important concern; and not only so, but as an event that prophecy and sacrifice foretold and prefigur'd.

§ II. The Death of Christ must not only have a plain and intelligible doctrine relative to man, as far as he is concerned in it, but it must be perfectly consistent with the most exalted and perfect Ideas that man can form of God. One of which Ideas is this, namely, that he is absolutely unchangeable in his nature, or perfections. See John iv. 24. viii. 44. 46. Rom. iii. 4. Heb. vi. 18. Jam. i. 17. It cannot then be, that any notions which men have formed concerning the death of Christ, repugnant to the idea of his unchangeableness can be just or right notions of this event. But all such representation of it, as appeasing, propitiating or reconciling, an unappeased, an unpropitious, an irreconciled God, does imply change in Deity; and of consequence, destroys the most perfect and adoreable idea we can form of our Maker. But nothing can be more absurd than the imagination, that the death of Christ, can have any such respect to Deity as to imply a change in his nature, will, or perfection. Neither does the New Testament ever represent the Death of Christ as reconciling God to Men, but as reconciling men to God, Rom. v. 8. i Cor. v. 18, 19. i John iv. 10. John iii. 16. and numbers of other Passages.

§ III. The
§ III. The Death of Christ must have a doctrine arising from it, not only plain and intelligible, so far as it concerns man, and every way consistent with the absolute unchangeableness of God, but it must also be perfectly consistent with God's moral government; and therefore, cannot be intended to relax or weaken the obligation men are under to moral restitution. See the sermon on the mount; all the instructions of Jesus, and of his Apostles; particularly, Matth. v. 17, 18. God's being unchangeable in his being, nature, and will, must lead us to conclude, that no one of his appointments, can in the least alter the moral obligations of any of his creatures. Nay, such is the nature of truth, or of moral obligation, that it must be eternally immutable, and cannot alter at the pleasure of any being. For altho' it was at the good pleasure of God, that he brought man into being, yet it was not in his power to make him reasonable and intelligent, and capable of moral character, without the obligations of reason, intelligence, and truth. Or, he could not make a creature, the produce of his own perfect wisdom, power and goodness, and at the same time set him free from the first obligations of a creature to its Creator. It could not then be in the power of God, or in his pleasure, to make any positive appointment, that shall remove; or abate, or lessen the force of moral obligation on man, considered as an accountable being.
§ IV. If the three foregoing premises can be supported, or be allowed as first-principles, then it will also appear an evident truth, that the obedience, virtue, or piety expressed in the death of Christ, cannot, in the eye of truth, or in the estimate of the God of truth, be regarded as any other’s obedience, virtue or piety; but only as his whose death expressed such obedience, virtue or piety.—All such notions therefore, which represent the imputation of that obedience, virtue or piety, as the obedience, &c. of another, or as transferable to another, are false, and incapable of defence. For so long as there is an essential, eternal, unalterable difference between truth and falsehood, so long it will be impossible that the God of truth, can reckon that action or suffering mine, in which another person was alone concerned, and of the virtue or piety of which, that single person can alone be conscious.—Nor is it possible that the virtue, merit, or rewardibility of the action or suffering, of any one being, can become the virtue, merit, or rewardibility of another, whose action or suffering it was not: for to suppose this, is to suppose a change in the nature and relation of things: for as much as the virtue and rewardibility of an action, would not remain relative to the action, or to him who performed it, but to another,
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another, who had no consciousness at all of performing the action, but who plainly perceived it was not his action, but the action of another.

§ V. The final reward of good men, with that gift of God, eternal life, cannot then be considered, as the reward of Christ's death and obedience; for as much as this would be to confound and destroy the relation of things: because reward would be conferred as the result of arbitrary will, and not regulated by truth or reason, or the relation of things; and the reason of the reward would then as well extend to one man as to another. For if the death of Christ be considered as the reason of the reward, the virtue of one man, and the vice of another man makes no difference. But a Being who confers reward on one man, on that reason, may as well confer it on another man, on the same reason. So that it is but supposing God to be as weak as he is arbitrary, in receding from the relation of things, and we may be assured, that his making the death of Christ, the reason of his conferring eternal-life on any one man, it may as well become the reason of his conferring eternal life upon another. But if it should be said, that the virtue and piety of one man makes it more fit, that God should confer the gift of eternal-life upon him, than it ever can be, that he should confer the same favour on another who is vicious and impious, then it will follow, that the reason of conferring eternal-life,
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does not lie in the death of Jesus, but in the
virtue and piety of men, which constitute the
fitness. For if God regards fitness in bestowing
his favours, then he is governed by truth; but
if he does so, then the reason of conferring etern-
al-life, must lie in the subject on which it is
conferred, and not in another, who is not the
subject.

But God is a God of truth as well as of mercy, and his holiness will not suffer him to vio-
late truth in the conferring of his favours; there-
fore he must regard personal fitness or unfitness:
and if so, then eternal-life cannot be conferred
by him on any man on account of Christ's death,
or of his obedience, as the reason of it. More-
over, eternal-life, conferred on man, cannot be
the purchase of Christ's death; because it is the
gift of God.—Death is the wages of sin, but
eternal-life is not called the wages of Christ's
death; Rom. vi. 23. No; but it is the gift of
God, the effect of free favour.—But if the pur-
chase, or wages of Christ's death, there would
then have been a price paid to God for it: which
single consideration would destroy the grace and
favour of it; it could no longer be the gift of
God.—Moreover, this gift is truly said to be,
in Christ Jesus our Lord.—But then, this does
by no means infer, that it is less the gift of
God, because conferred thro' the Mediation of
Christ.—The gift reaches us, as it is the result
of our being raised from the dead, which is to
be effected by our Lord Jesus Christ; and with

B 2 great
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great propriety, eternal-life is said to be the
gift of God, in or by Jesus Christ.

This gives a grand opening into the next pro-
position, viz.

§ VI. The death of Christ, as the doctrine of
it lies in the New Testament, must be an event
of great importance to mankind.

We are now to examine into the reason of
the death of Christ, and in what respects man
may be said to receive advantage by it. And
in doing this, we shall endeavour to keep clear
of all prejudices from human schemes; pay no
manner of regard to any human authorities;
but pursue the directions of Revelation, and fol-
low no other light but that, as far as reason
will enable, to find out the sense and meaning
of the doctrine.

Reason I. The reason of the death of Christ,
appears, by revelation to be, the death of man.
In the history of the first-human-pair, Gen. iii.
15--20. the sentence upon the first offence,
is death, dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt
return.—Death must take place upon Adam and
all his descendants, in order to regulate their
desires and affections towards sensitive enjoy-
ments, which was threatened to Adam even in
his paradisaical state, Gen. ii. 17. So that death
was not excluded from the idea of man in his
state of innocence: for he was told, that in the
day that he eat of the fruit, he should surely die.

His
His eating confirm'd the sentence, and man is removed from the tree of life. -- *Adam* becomes the parent of a race of mortal creatures. So that as the natural head, or common father of men, *all* are said to *sin*, that is, in the common language of the Jews, to *die* in him: for so *sin* is put for the consequence of *sin*, Gen. iv. 7. God says to Cain, if thou dost not well, *sin lieth at the door*, i.e. the *demerit* of *sin* : the *doing not well*, was *the sin* ; what awaited the not doing well, is the *demerit*, or consequence of it. So Gen. xix. 15. The Angels bid Lot hasten out of *Sodom*, lest he be consumed in the *iniquity of the city*, i.e. in the *punishment* of the city's *sin* or *iniquity*. Lev. xx. 20. And if a man lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness; *they shall bear their sin*.--How is this to be born? Why, *they shall die childless*. Here *sin* intends, in the very letter of this law, *punishment*. Again, the children of *Israel* are threatened upon their idolatries, that they shall bear their *iniquities* forty years, Numb. xiv. 34.

These are passages very sufficient to shew the use of the term, *sin*, or *iniquity*; and prove that it did signify very usually in the Jewish idiom, the *demerit* or consequence of *sin*. And in this, and no other sense can *all* men be said to have sinned in *Adam*, see Rom. v. 12. as by *one* man *sin* entered into the world, and death by *sin*; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, that is, died in *Adam*, or be-
come mortal in him. So that, the sin by which
death entred, or came upon all men, was the
single offence, of a single, individual man, A-
dam; and cannot therefore, with truth, be af-
firm'd of more than one.—All the descendents
of Adam, have, to a man, been incapable of
his personal guilt in the one offence, that con-
firm'd the sentence of mortality, [or, if you
will, gave it place in fact.] forasmuch as no
one of his family appear to have begun their
existence, when Adam eat the forbidden fruit;
and many of Adam's descendents, who have
been subjected to death, have never been ca-
pable of any sin at all. For example, those in-
fants who have died before they could put on
moral character.

All, sinning in Adam, must intend, all be-
coming subject to mortality in Adam. And
with this agrees, 1 Cor. xv. 22. As in Adam
all die.

That the death of all men, through the of-
fence of one, is the reason of the death of Christ,
seems evidently to be the true state of the case,
from all the revelations.

So, if the promise, made to our first parents,
has any intelligible meaning, viz. that the seed
of the woman should bruise the head of the ser-
pent, Gen. iii. 15. it must intend this recovery
from death, as in this lies the weight of the
Sentence, ver. 19. For dust thou art, and unto
dust thou shalt return.—In confirmation of which
doctrine of man's recovery from death, the
language
language of all the sacrifices of slain beasts, appears to have typified or shadowed-out a sacrifice that should destroy the force and dominion of death, and remove it from the human family. The ceasing of sacrifice, bloody sacrifice among Jews and Gentiles, upon the universal spread of the Gospel, seems to confirm this opinion of sacrifices. And the opinion has not, that I have ever read or heard, been confuted, or exposed to contempt.

Most certainly this is the doctrine our blessed Lord gives of his own death. He says, he gives his flesh for the life of the world. And that he gives his life a ransom for many, comp. John vi. chap. Matth. xx. 28. And the phrase St. Paul has thus put, 1 Tim. ii. 6. *who gave his life a ransom for all.* And farther, Jesus himself teaches concerning his mediation, that he is appointed of the Father to raise the dead, and to become the resurrection and the life. As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself; and has given him power to raise the dead; ay; all the dead. See John v. from 21--30. comp. ch. xi. 25. In a word, Jesus has taught no other doctrine concerning his own death, that gives us the reason of it, but that it is the appointed way to his becoming the resurrection and life to the human family.

And the reason will appear not only from the analogy that St. Paul has observed between the one offence of one man, and death reigning by one;
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one; and the one act of obedience of one man, and justification of life taking place in consequence thereof, Rom. v. 15—20. but it farther appears from this consideration, viz.

Reas. II. God made man, at first, by his word, the Logos, and put him upon trial; in which state he suffered death to take place: it seems therefore perfectly consistent with infinite wisdom, that the same word, the Logos, should take flesh, in order to explain and open the divine purpose with regard to the recovery of men from the grave. By this, a personal dominion over death is ascertained, in him who is said to be the Resurrection and the Life! and this, in the character of a restoring head. An earnest of it was given, in consequence of his own resurrection, in the many bodies of the saints which arose; and appeared to many in Jerusalem, Matth. xxvii. 52, 53. And by many antecedent acts of power which he exerted, equal to raising the dead, during his personal ministry; and by the communicating of equal powers to his apostles and ministers after his ascension; which proofs of his capacity, and of the great design of his mission, are incontestibly strong and convincing.

Reas. III. Neither is there any thing in the doctrine of Christ's death, as it lies in the revelation, but what is worthy of all acceptation! It is perfectly well adapted to the embrace and approbation
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approbation of all men. And that it is not the universal mean of light and knowledge, is because men have not been content with the plainness of the doctrine; but have made it a mystical, incredible thing, and so quite unworthy the acceptance of any reasonable man. But as it is in the New Testament, it is a doctrine worthy the acceptance of all men, as men of all nations and ages have had some glimmerings of hope, that this present, is not the best and most perfect condition and state of human existence. But since ages are run off without any recovery of the flumbering generations of men to life, it was worthy the wisdom of God, to appoint this opening of life and of immortality in the last ages of the world, that men might have an assurance that God is not slack concerning his promise; nor will he cease to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

The reason of the death of Christ, appears then to be the dominion which death has asserted over the whole human family.

If it should be asked, why could not the death of holy men, prophets, and instructors of mankind, who bore testimony to truth by their blood, why could not these bear a sufficient testimony?—Jesus shall make the reply in parable, Matth. xxi. 33 to the end, comp. Mar. xii. 1-12, also Matth. xii. 38-46. where he describeth God as sending his servants which men treated ill, and destroyed, and at last his son.
And in order that the death of Christ might become a propitiation or an atonement to the minds of men, it was needful that his filiation should appear, that God should bear witness to him, as his son, in the most peculiar sense: for as much as some instrument seems as requisite to be employed to raise man from the dead, as to form or make him at first, from his original nothing, or of the dust! And it would not have given so much satisfaction to the minds of men, if this high honour of asserting dominion over death and the grave, should have been conferred on any one of the human race, a mere man, born in the run of ordinary generation.—Nor would it have been free from perplexing enquiries, had it been an angel; that is, on the supposition that the revelation had informed us of numbers of these. We should have been for asking, why this angel? what has he done? why not another?

Which, at once shews, the reasonableness of Christ's being the appointed head of life, and restorer of it, as we discern it was in consequence of a scene of the most divine behaviour, which expressed obedience, and unfailing piety even unto the death—and the whole undertaken from a most refined benevolence, or an unparallelled compassion to a race of creatures, under the dominion of death; and by the most exalted character! the son of God!
Reas. IV. This will add a farther reason for the death of Christ, as it represents the justice of the divine Government, in subjecting the human family to death; since he could admit of the death, of not only the innocent, but even of a perfectly virtuous character: nay, could suffer him to undergo the most painful death, as it was connected with the most exalted glory! so that men may learn, in the treatment of Jesus, that virtue is the way to happiness, and that death shall not be able to cut off, or separate from the final possession of it. The difference between him and the human family, lay, in its being impossible that the pains of death should hold him, any longer than the nuchthemeron, the part of three days and nights, determin'd by prophecy. Whereas death will hold all those men on whom it has seized, excepting those who were the trophies of his personal resurrection, till the season appointed for the coming of Christ, and the general resurrection, that redemption of the body. The reason why they, the many arose, was in fulfilment of prophecy, John v. 25. the hour is coming and now is, that the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God. Comp. ver. 28, as referring to the general resurrection: For the hour is com- in which ALL that are in their grave, shall bear his voice; which seems to intimate, that he spoke before of the number of the dead that should rise, as witnesses at his own resurrection. And
And their rising was a testimony to men, of Christ's rising in character of the resurrection and the life, to the human-world.

Reas. V. The reason of Christ's death becoming requisite to his putting on the character of the restoring, recovering head of the children of men, is, in that his resurrection from the dead, by the power of God, gives the fullest assurance to men that can be given of his divine-mission.—It would not have proved his divine character, that he was raised from the dead, merely on account of his unspotted holiness, or his most consummate virtue; unless it had been a truth that he was appointed of the Father to raise the dead. This doctrine he had taught of himself, and that his death, and his resurrection from the dead on the third day, should take place, in confirmation of the truth of this very doctrine. But it was impossible that he should have thus risen from the dead, and should have given such evidence of his exaltation, that followed his resurrection, if this had not been a true doctrine which he taught concerning himself. The testimony of divine-power would have been given to a LIE! which is repugnant to the known perfections of Deity.

Reas. VI. Besides, by his real death, or his actually resigning his spirit into the hands of God, whilst on the cross, his resurrection could only take place from the energy of God, to whom
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whom he had committed his spirit: and therefore, there is such a degree of vigour and force in the evidence, that must eternally afford a reason of the event! which way soever we view the death of Christ, considered as an event in which man is concerned, we may perceive the wisdom and goodness of God in the Appointment.

Reas. VII. God's raising Jesus from the dead, and giving him glory, was, that our faith and hope might be in God, 1 Pet. i. 21. This is a finished reason of the death of Christ! for as our resurrection from the dead, depends on the promise of God, and refers to a very future season, so, inasmuch as God has raised up Christ from the dead, and given him glory, in consequence of his assuring men that he will himself raise all the dead; so it is a ground or reason of our faith in God, with regard to the truth of the doctrine, and our hope of reaping the benefit of it, in God's own time. And this has great emphasis laid upon it throughout the New Testament writings. See again, John vi. 33. "the bread of God, is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world, ver. 40. And this is the Father's will that sent me, that every one who seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.--I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye
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ye may be also, John xiv. 3. Ye believe in God, believe also in me, ver. 1."—So that faith in God, will express itself, in the most becoming manner, among such who are privileged with the Gospel, in believing on the message of his Son. And thus, he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, i. e. he has the doctrine of eternal life, in the strongest point of light, in his doctrine, John iii. 36. or, by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, men have life thro' his name, i. e. through the power and authority which God has given him to restore men to life, John xx. 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life thro' his name. This is the end for which the Gospel was written, or committed to writing. And an end worthy of God, and worthy the regard of all men, to whom the written Gospel is vouchsafed.

Here I might remark upon the trifling objection of some, who have pretended, "that Jesus Christ never ordered or appointed that his Gospel should be committed to writing." Whereas the interest of all men, is manifestly concerned in it; nothing less than men's having life in his name! which is an argument of the fitness of its being committed to writing; a reason that no other history in the world can boast.

The advantage then of the doctrine of Christ's death, is to confirm our faith in God, as a Being that will justify and save men, by recovering them from death. For this is the complete view
view of men's justification, who have so believed in the doctrine of his Son, the resurrection and the life, as to conform to the doctrine of his death.

§ VII. This brings us to consider, upon what foundation or reason Christ is to confer life. That he will raise all men from the dead, is the doctrine of the Gospel. But then, the consequences of such resurrection will not be universally beneficial; "those that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and those that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 29. comp. 2 Cor. v. 10.

It follows, that doing good, will be the qualification for life, and for the avoidance of the second death; and doing evil will be attended with damnation, or with the loss of life. The death of Christ then considered as a ransom for all, reaches no farther than the recovering to life all the dead, in order to their final judgment: but those only can receive the benefit of such resurrection who have behaved well, and worthy the several dispensations of God towards them. This view of Christ's death secures the glory of God's moral government; justifies him in the admission of death to reign for a season over all men; and, at the same time, recommends the obligation to moral rectitude in the most forcible manner.

And to this purpose, whenever the apostles

men-
mention the death of Christ, they use it to enforce obedience to God; either by representing the good will of God towards men recommended by it, or the obligation this lays men under to holiness and virtue. Should I go about to prove this, I must recite the main doctrine of all the Epistles. I will only mention one passage as a sample, 1 Pet. ii. 24. who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live to righteousness.

If any regard is had to the Context, we shall perceive, that the apostle had just been exhorting Christian servants or vassals, who had infidel masters, to express reverence to the froward, as well as to the good, under their buffetings; and he urges the example of Jesus, who had been most cruelly used by the Jewish Nation, of which Peter, and those to whom he wrote made a part; and therefore he says, who his own self bare OUR sins.

§ VIII. But should it be said, that many strong passages mention the death of Christ as tho' it was something vicarious, or in the place of man, or in his stead; that he personally bore our sins, and had our iniquities charged upon him: to this I would endeavour a plain and full answer.

1. We should, I am persuaded, carefully observe, that no such sort of doctrine is to be found
found in the Gospels; wherein we might expect to have found it, had it been a doctrine belonging to the death of Christ. — There is indeed one passage, where an allusion is had to prophecy, *If.* liii. 4. and what the prophet says, of a great person, the Messiah's bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, the historian Matthew, understands of Jesus's removing the maladies and grievances of men, see *Matth.* viii. 16, 17. and he calls it a fulfilment of the prophecy. If then, we may conclude any thing from the authority of this Evangelist, we may safely understand all such allusions to prophecy, or to sacrifice, that intimate Christ's bearing our sins in his own body, to signify his removing those evils, that our present condition of being is exposed unto. For will any say, that he became sick himself, or received the infection of distemper, or was possessed of devils, when the historian says, that in accomplishment of the prophecy, himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses? — comp. *1 Pet.* ii. 24.—by his stripe we are healed, as in consequence of our following his steps, ver. 21. and thus are restored from our wanderings, ver. 25. — God's laying upon him the iniquity of us all, can intend no such thing, as imputing the crime or demerit of our sin: but his appointing him, to remove death from all; and every such evil, at present as may promote the good of mankind, and advance the cause of moral truth. The prophetic expression of laying upon him the iniquity of us
The Doctrine of Redemption, us all, if applied to Jesus, from If. liii. 6. must be understood in such a sense as St. Matthew has understood his taking our infirmities and bearing our sicknesses.

To suppose the death of Christ as vicarious, or as in the place of man, is absurd, because his death was not under the appointment of man. Nor could any man, or all men, have performed the office: For the death of Christ was to be the mean of restoring life to all men. But any vicarious person, is in the place, to do the office, and to do it under the appointment of that other whose vicar, or substitute he is. And to suppose God to appoint his death as vicarious, is the same absurdity; because this would suppose God's placing that thing in the stead of another thing, between which there is no resemblance in capacity.—but by his death he is to remove the death of all men; therefore it cannot be vicarious. The death of Christ does not appear to have been vicarious, in this view, for the death of man, as expressed in the sentence, implies in it his seeing corruption, or returning to his original dust, which God's holy one was not suffered to do, Acts ii. 27. Neither could Christ's death be vicarious, as it has not at all prevented the execution of the sentence, but all die, and return to their dust, and see corruption! even the most sincere and faithful disciples and followers of this Jesus do so! The death of Christ cannot then be vicarious, or in the place of man; as it does not prevent the
plain and intelligible as important; &c. 27

the death of men; but must be considered, as only the qualification of Jesus, exhibiting to men, and marking out his capacity to raise the dead, or proving his designation for the office: for he was delivered through or by the offences of men, and raised again for their justification; or, to give an earnest of their rising from the dead, that final justification of all good men; who, till then, lie under the wages, or demerit of sin, see Rom. iv. 25.

The death of Christ does not appear to have been vicarious, with respect to the moral character that it exhibited: for tho' it evidenced that he was perfectly free from sin, as it was a free-will offering of himself, in perfect confidence on the power and veracity of his father, and in full assurance that the pains and throws of death could not hold him, but that it would make known to him the ways of life, Acts ii. 28. and in consequence of prophecy, was made necessary to his entrance on his glory, Luke xxiv. 26. Yet, his death does not procure a freedom from sin, in any of the children of men; no, not in the best Christians, 1 John i. 8, 10. but nevertheless, his death condemns sin in the flesh, shews the evil of transgression, as it was made needful in the appointment of God, to recover men from under the dominion of death, which dominion took place by reason of sin. And this, the whole constitution of sacrifices under the Law of Moses could not do. So I understand, Rom. viii. 3. For what the law could not do, in
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that it was weak thro' the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. His death does indeed demand that men should die unto sin, and live unto God. In that he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. or, he died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living, Rom. xiv. 9. And it would be a base and blasphemous thought, to imagine the death of Christ vicarious, as relative to God; or, that he was God's substitute in dying for us; forasmuch as it is impossible that the Deity can be exposed to any passion or suffering.--He is for ever incapable of any passion, as he is unchangeably perfect.

To suppose God could look upon Christ as a sinner, or as chargeable with any sin of others, is a manifest contradiction of his truth, and of the perfection of his nature: so far is it from being any satisfaction to his justice, or any vindication of the honour of his laws!---For if God could charge demerit of sin upon an innocent and virtuous person, Truth, or the reason of things would be violated! and if we suppose God falsifying truth, his creatures can be under no moral obligation, from either his example, or authority. This seems to be the unavoidable consequence of men's supposing God, the God of truth, imputing, putting, or charging the demerit of men's sin to the account of Jesus.
The Gospels, on the contrary, ever describe God's bearing testimony to him, as his obedient, well-beloved son, in whom he was always well pleased; which he could not be, if he could ever regard him as a sinner, or as chargeable with the demerit of sin; unless, we can suppose him well-pleased with sin; and delighting to inflict the demerit of it, upon the most obedient and holy of his Creation.

§ IX. Or could we suppose that Christ personally bore our sins, and was chargeable with the sin of the whole world; it would render the great doctrine of the Gospel a vain and useless thing, namely, repentance towards God.— Of what, and for what, should men express repentance, and remorse of mind, if the sin of the world is imputed or reckoned, in the sight of God, to the account of Jesus?— It is enough that they can, contrary to reason and eternal truth, look upon Christ as chargeable with all their transgressions! No law should henceforth restrain them; no rules of moral conduct oblige them; but they should take the comfort of laying all their guilt upon Jesus, or take the consolation that God has done it! This I can scarce write down without trembling, tho' it is no strange doctrine, much less a new one. But could the doctrine of Christ's death be more horridly perverted by men or devils?

Repentance has no reasonable foundation, if God has or can impute our sins to the charge of
§ X. It is said, Gal. iii. 10, 11. that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for the just by faith shall live. comp. Rom. i. 17. iv. 15. iii. 20, 21. And hence, it has been supposed by some, that by the scheme of the gospel, men, who pretend to justification as the result of personal obedience, are under a curse.

The sense of these, and other like passages, cannot intend, in the least, to relax man's regard to the obedience of the moral law, which is eternal. For this would be to contradict the truth of things, as well as the express declaration of Jesus, see § III. They can only intend, that immoral men, who sought for justification of life, from the sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic Law, as full atonement for sin, or as the security of future life, were under a curse, as the very offerings were themselves confessions of guilt. And the letter of the law pronounced a curse on all such who did not continue in all things, &c. Deut. xxvii. 26. who did not confirm the words of that law, by doing them. But the apostle says, ver. 9. in that third chap. of his Epistle to the Gal. That they which are
faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. If then, the Israelites, under the Mosaic Law, departed from Abraham's faith, and expected to be justified in virtue of their sacrifices, tho' they continued not to do the works of the law, they were cursed by the very letter of the law.—For as Abraham's faith justified him, only as it led him to every act of obedience to the divine will, so it was impossible, that his posterity could be justified by neglecting moral obligation, and trusting to their sacrifices and atonements. Those works of the law, would leave them under a curse: forasmuch as they could not be instituted of God, in order to his dispensing with the letter of that law which he had given them; the just by faith shall live.

No man can look into the words of the law, in the xxviith of Deut. from the 15 to 26 ver. and then declare, that men could be justified by sacrifice, or even by the mercy of God, who did not confirm the words of that law to do them, unless he can suppose that God could justify idolaters; or disobedient and rebellious children; or such as removed their neighbour's land-mark; or who made the blind to wander; or such, who lay with their father's wives; or those who lay with beasts! &c. So that works opposed to faith, must, in the language of the apostle, intend such as superseded a regard to moral obligation, which a faith in God, that is a justifying faith, will ever imply in it. But the Jewish Nation had manifestly gone into a vile
The Doctrine of Redemption, vile and base substitution of offering and sacrifice, in the place of judgment, mercy and faith, see Matth. xxiii. 23.--They had excluded that faith in God, which justifies only as it is attended with judgment, or justice, and mercy.

This view of the Jewish Nation, will give a key to the understanding of St. Paul, when he opposes works to faith, in bar of men's justification. As many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse.

It must then be a truth, that as faith in Abraham, leading him to constant obedience to moral obligation, was imputed to him for righteousness: so faith in him who raised up Jesus from the dead, in like manner influencing our obedience, will be imputed to us for righteousness. See the argument, Rom. iv. 16. to the end.

Or, may we not understand, as many as are of the works of the law, to be under a curse, to be such only who do those works which the law condemneth, viz. idolaters, rebellious children, murderers, and adulterers; in which sense the apostle must be understood, i Tim. i. 9. the law is not made for [against] a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient; for the ungodly and for sinners, &c. But the law cannot put under a curse, men who conform to it; or upright and righteous men, and such there are, or else the apostle cannot be understood, comp. Rom. iv. 15.

The
The Law cursed none but wicked men. Even the Mosaic edition of it; for it blessed them that were righteous, merciful and holy. It must then intend, that those only were cursed who were wicked, and who expected that sacrifices and offerings would atone for their guilt. And the moral law must ever remain the rule of right or of justification to men, whether they enjoy the Gospel or not, comp. Rom. ii. 13. with Rom. iii. 26. Tit. ii. 14. iii. 8.

But as the Mosaic Edition provided no measure of atoning, or removing the curse of the law from such who had incurred the curse; the doctrine of the Gospel promiseth pardon and life, even to these if they become penitent. See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5.—if they return to their obedience and become personally righteous, who before were unrighteous.

§ XI. But Christ is said to be made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13.

How is this? Truly no more than as in the language of the law, every one was cursed that hung on a tree. See Deut. xxi. 22, 23.—For he that is hanged, is accursed of God, or the curse of God.—But then, it must be a man who had committed sin worthy of such a death. And these were the blasphemers and idolaters, whom, after they had stoned, the Jews hung up, not on a living tree, but on a piece of dead timber, fastened in the earth. Instances we have, Numb. xxv. 4. and probably Achan, Josh.
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Josh. vii. 25. Josh. viii. 29. and others.---But does it hence follow, that Christ, because of his death, was made of God a curse, in any such sense? Could he abhor him as a blasphemer or an idolater? It is impious and blasphemous to suppose it! How then was he made a curse for us? ὡς ἐγὼ ὑμῶν καὶ άγας. Methinks the preposition may be rendered, upon, or over. So it seems to signify when it governs the same case as it does here, see 1 Cor. xv. 29. else why are they then baptized, for, over; or upon the dead? The reasoning of St. Paul would lead one to such a rendering in this place, being made a curse over, or upon us:—that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, thro' Christ Jesus.---Here, the blessing is put as the produce of Christ's being made a curse. And how is this, but by the guilt of his death being revenged on the Jewish Nation? which this apostle has largely insisted upon, in the ixth, xth and xth chapters of his Epistle to Romans.

It is certain, he could not be accursed of God,--or made a curse of God, any farther than God permitted him to undergo the most ignominious death, which the Law had appointed for the greatest malefactors. And altho' wicked men treated him as accursed;--smitten and forsaken of God, and afflicted; notwithstanding this was the sense of the Jewish Nation, in fulfilment of the prophecy, see Is. liii. 4. yet it would ill-become men, who would judge according
cording to truth, to look upon him in any such light: as easily could God cease to be God, as he could treat his only begotten Son, or his well-beloved-Son, as an out-cast, or an accursed thing! It discovered the amazing patience, and adorable forbearance of God, that he suffered a nation thus to treat the most amiable and divine character that ever appeared in it. And eventually the curse of God came upon the Jewish nation, for their sin and infidelity; and by its destruction, the evidence of the truth of the Gospel, was made illustrious to the Gentile nations.

And yet, as under the Law, without shedding of blood there was no remission, Heb. ix. 22. so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, ver. 28. And the blood of Jesus Christ is said to cleanse us from all sin, 1 John i. 7, and he is the propitiation for our sins, ch. ii. 2.

§ XII. Should we attend with accuracy to the Mosaic institution of sacrifices, we shall be able to discern, that they, as an external homage, were an open profession of refuge, which the penitent took in the mercy of God.--And at the yearly expiation, the high-priest flood in the holy of holies, where the mercy-seat was placed, with the blood of the sacrifices of the whole people, and without shedding of blood, they had no promise of remission. The death of Christ therefore did more than answer to these shadowy representations, since by virtue
of it, he entered the heavens, as the Restorer of life to the whole human family; and by that one sacrifice for ever perfecteth all who are holy.

His blood then cleanseth from sin, as in consequence of it, he destroys death, makes its dominion void,—His blood cleanseth from all sin; as it enables him to remove the last marks of sin, that remain on the human family: and so is he said, Heb. ix. to appear the second time, without sin, i. e. any marks of mortality in himself, and by removing all mortal symptoms from every of the pious dead, without sin, death, unto salvation, Heb. ix. 28.

Thus he becomes the propitiatory, or mercy-feat, thro' faith in his blood, as we discern the compass of the divine-rectitudes, including the most certain prospects of men's deliverance from death. This is the remission, or loosening from the bands of death, by which men are held, Rom. iii. 15, 16. [ἀφέωμεν] the term rendered remission here, signifies relaxing or loosening from chains or bands.

§ XIII. That the doctrine of Christ's death, or of his blood, can extend no farther, than a display of the good-will of God to Men, in not imputing to them their trespasses; but removing death from all men who are penitent and pious; the above observations are intended to set forth.—Not that the author of these remarks
plain and intelligible as important, &c. 37

remarks pretends to be infallibly right; but will ever be open to conviction, and thankful for any farther light. He doubts not, but all who have any interest in mystery, will load this Essay with reproaches; and that great Numbers of pious and good people, who have long imagined, that there is something in the death of Christ, that is a sort of atonement, price or satisfaction paid to Deity, on account of which man is admitted to the Hope of life; that these will have some prejudices against this Essay. But,

To these he freely says, that he cannot perceive an atonement made to God by the death of Jesus: but he can conceive of it as an atonement made to the consciences of men; as it gives them the most reconciling prospects of future being! And he would farther observe, that tho’ we are said to be bought with a price, 1 Cor. vi. 20. vii. 23. yet, we are not to consider this figurative, allusive manner of speech, as literally true; but to intend the obligation that the death of Jesus lays Christian-men under, even as much as can be conceived from the most beneficial contract that we could have made. The price, if considered as paid to God, has no sense in it; because we are said at the same time to be purchased FOR him. Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body, and your spirit, which are God’s; his unalienable property. The price cannot be paid
paid to the devil, or to him that hath the power of death! This supposition would be shocking—-it follows, that as nothing that Christ, or any being could do, could possibly give the Deity any farther right than he ever had to us; so the expression can only intend, that the death of Christ opens to us a farther view of the eternal demands of divine love and mercy! and was so far from making God more propitious, or giving to him any new and fresh claims upon us, that it only manifested the grace and love of the Father, which had ever been invariably the same; and which now openly confirms and establishes the promises of mercy.

It will therefore be no disagreeable thing, to pious men, if they can perceive that the Author has been endeavouring to remove the rubbish, and dissipate the clouds that have been thrown on the doctrine of Christ's death. And tho' he should have mistaken the scheme, they who think he has been honest, will allow that he has a right to better information. And as to those who think so, and are able to correct his errors, or mistakes, he is persuaded, that not only himself, but the interests of religion, make a demand of such information.

Finally, if his reasoning should prove just and conclusive, then the doctrine of redemption, or of the atonement, is an important doctrine,
plain and intelligible as important, &c. as he has shewn it to be a plain, easy, intelligible one. For this is a first principle with him, that every doctrine must be plain, in proportion to its use and importance.

May the God of truth protect and prosper this undertaking, so far as it is calculated to promote the truth, as it is in Jesus. So prays the Author.

FINIS.