

THE BELIEVER'S TREASURY

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The Believer's Treasury by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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1868.

141. k. 186.

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS REPRINTED AT THE DESIRE OF ONE WHO IS

NOW GONE TO HER REST,

AND IS DEDICATED LOVINGLY TO HER

MEMORY.

P R E F A C E .

THERE is no difficulty in stating the truths of revelation in a manner as incapable of logical refutation, as those of any branch of morals. But although in this manner the judgment of men would be convinced of their abstract qualities, and the mouth of the caviller would be stopped, the heart would remain as unmoved as before, and the affections be as little drawn into kindred sentiments with those of their Eternal Author. The powers of men's intellect vary considerably in different individuals, but the hearts and consciences of all men are extremely alike. On this account it is, no doubt, that very few portions of scripture are given in an argumentative form, but mostly in a manner to appeal to the affections of mankind: hence the apostle Paul speaks of the inefficacy of "the enticing words of man's wisdom," or the charms of human eloquence; and prefers addressing men, whose hearts he wished to convert, with great plainness of speech. In the following pages, no attempt is made at proving any of the positions

which are advanced, but they are brought forward merely to direct the reader to the consideration of the various branches of the subject for himself; that he may judge from the Divine Oracles themselves, how far they are consistent with the revelation of Jehovah.

As the enmity of the natural mind to the truths of God is perhaps never overcome perfectly, even in the holiest of the saints here on earth, it is not to be expected but that the truths here brought forward will meet with much cavilling, not only from those whose hearts are still alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, but even from some whose faces are nevertheless set Zion-ward. It may, perhaps, be thought that had the following observations been couched in language more congenial to the refinements of the present day, the truths intended to be pointed out, would have gained a more general acquiescence. But, however plausible such an idea may be, neither experience, nor the words of scripture afford any justification to it. Those who love the truth, will love it in whatever dress they find it arrayed; whilst those who love it not, would equally object to it with whatever outward form of loveliness it appeared.

It may, perhaps, be advisable to inform the reader of the cause of drawing up this Treatise; in so doing the method in which it is proposed to treat the subject, will be also most clearly shewn.

Some time after the writer was satisfied concerning the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, doubts occurred to him respecting its consistency with Divine Justice. It was suggested that there was no equity in one man's suffering the punishment due to transgression in the place of another; that such a proceeding was not only contrary to our ordinary notions of equity, but contrary also to the declarations of scripture, which say, expressly, that the righteous shall not suffer for the wicked; but that every man's sin should be charged upon his own head, &c., &c. This difficulty could not be resolved into the sovereignty of God, which supposes him to act according to the good pleasure of his own will, while he giveth no account of these matters to any of his creatures, because God can will nothing but what is just and equitable. Sometimes the willingness of Christ to suffer was pleaded as a proof of the justice of the Father to inflict; but this plea was unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the submission of any person to sustain an act of injustice does not render the act itself just. No better arguments than these being to be gathered from such writers as were consulted, it was resolved to search the Scriptures alone, submitting in spirit unto him who had first dictated, and hath taken upon himself to make us understand them. While engaged in this investigation, the union of Christ and the church, seemed to furnish a key to the complete harmony of those parts

which appeared before so discordant ; and the manner in which it does so, is attempted to be set forth in the following Treatise. Thus Jesus Christ having been found a retreat from the enemy, who by obtruding doubts would have shaken the foundations of the faith, this statement is published that it may be of use to all those who are assailed in a similar manner. At the same time it is admitted, that, amongst the mass even of Christians, there are but too few who enquire into the merits of the cause in which they are engaged ; to whom no doubts ever suggest themselves ; and who, unable to give a reason of the hope that is in them, have received as much of the truth as they know merely from human teachers. There are others, also, who, simply crediting the Scripture testimony, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, are happy in that truth without once enquiring into the equity of it, or thinking it necessary so to do. May the peace of the former be confirmed, and that of the latter increased, without being disturbed !

It is almost useless to combat, in this place, the opposition which the following statement must meet with, in common with every other declaration of the free and undeserved favour of God, namely, that it is inimical to the practice of good works. But it may be briefly observed, that the meaning of the term "good works,"

ought to be accurately defined, before the objection can be fairly discussed. No one can be an enemy of such things as he really considers to be good works; but when such things are spoken of in connection with Scripture, it is necessary to distinguish between those which are morally, and those that are spiritually good. The former, which respect beneficence one towards another, as reasonable beings, as fellow creatures, and sharers of the same troubles, pains, and sorrows, are no doubt, as the apostle says, "good and profitable unto men;" but the latter, which merit the Divine approbation, mankind are utterly incapable of performing at any time, but as they are created anew in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii, 10. As friends to justice, benevolence, and peace among men, we ought to encourage such dispositions and the good works which they produce, by every means in our power. But when men speak of these things as being spiritually good, well-pleasing and acceptable to God, as if they were in themselves the cause of righteousness, holiness, and fruitfulness in his eyes, then it is necessary to expose all this delusive righteousness to be no better than an abomination in the sight of God; and against bringing the halt, the blind, and the lame into the service of the sanctuary. It is thus testifying against the misapplication of good works, a misapplication which robs the Lord Jesus Christ of the fulness of his redemption, and subverts the immortal