REMARKS ON CERTAIN OPINIONS RECENTLY PROPAGATED, RESPECTING UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION, AND OTHER TOPICS CONNECTED WITH THAT SUBJECT

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Remarks on Certain Opinions Recently Propagated, Respecting Universal Redemption, and Other Topics Connected with That Subject by William Hamilton

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WILLIAM HAMILTON

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TO THE

REV. ANDREW THOMSON, D. D.

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH:

THE FOLLOWING VOLUME,

AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM

FOR

HIS PRIVATE VIRTUES,

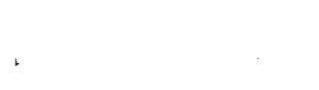
AND

THE SIGNAL SERVICES, WHICH HE HAS RENDERED TO THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY, LEARNING, AND RELIGION;

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



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PREFACE.

WITH the Scriptures in our hands, which are so plain that he who runs may read them; and after the many years that have passed over the Church; it might have been expected that all controversy amongst the real friends of religion would now have been closed; that they would have been agreed upon the essential doctrines of Christianity; and would have been distinguished for the unity of their faith, and of their knowledge of the Sou of God.

But never have reasonable expectations been more completely frustrated. Every year is teeming with crude theories, and wild and visionary notions upon the most sacred and deeply interesting doctrines of revelation: and in proportion as these speculations are opposed to the letter and spirit of the oracles of God, they are advanced with the greater boldness, and urged with the more vehemence and pertinacity.

When the world lies in wickedness; when such multitudes are rapidly rushing on to eternity, regardless of the infinitely momentous realities before them; and our own life is so short and uncertain: it is lamentable to find, what we fondly hope is the house of God, divided against itself; and to see the time and attention of one portion of the servants incessantly withdrawn from their nobler duties and more useful employments, to defend the property of their Master from the attacks of another class of the domestics. But however irksome, this is a task which we are not at liberty to de-All his goods are precious. Every part of revealed truth is invaluable. Coming from the God of love, and fitted to raise those who embrace it to the knowledge and enjoyment of himself: we are bound to contend for its preservation and purity; to guard it with fidelity and zeal; and never surrender it to any of its assailants.

The opinions opposed in the following pages, are of a most dangerous description. Though repugnant to the dictates of inspiration; they have met, in some quarters, with a far more ready reception than could have been anticipated: so that, though controversy is at all times unpleasant, it is strongly imperative on the friends of sound religion, to point out the fallacy of the tenets in question, and put the public upon their guard against their pernicious tendency.

Though the work is short, it is longer than was either intended or wished. To avoid swelling the volume, many topics have been omitted, and others treated with more brevity, than perhaps was consistent with perspicuity. The reader, however, who is desirous of more information upon the subjects dis-

cussed, will find his labour amply rewarded by consalting the writings of other authors. The Rev. James Carlile of Dublin, in his Old Doctrine of Faith, has given a learned and elaborate refutation of the notion that faith consists in an assent to the truth. Mr Innes, in his Origin and Permanence of Christian Joy, has very judiciously shewn the necessity of faith in order to salvation, and the impropriety of making consciousness the evidence of our believing. Dr Barr, in his Sermon on the Peace of Believing, has in a masterly manner proved, that the Antinomian assurance of salvation is unattainable, unnecessary, and injurious. Mr Brotherston in his Brief View of Faith, and a Minister of the Church of Scotland, in a letter to Thomas Erskine, Esq. on his work, entitled The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel; have treated the principal topics in debate, with great clearness and conclusiveness. Since these pages went to the press, Mr Barclay of Irvine has published some useful Strictures on the same subject. Mr Mason's (of Wishawtown) Observations, Doctrinal and Practical, on Saving Faith, are truly excellent. A more enlarged view of Saving Faith may be found in Dr Colquboun's work under that title. Fuller on the Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation, and Scott on the Warrant and Nature of Faith, deserve to be carefully studied. But those who have leisure and opportunity will find their pains still more richly recompensed by the perusal of Brown of Wamphray on Justification, Edwards' admirable Work on the Affections, and Owen's incomparable volume on Redemption, or The Death of Death in the Death of Christ.

May the Lord in mercy bless the means employed for scattering ignorance, error, and vice; hasten the time when the people shall be all righteous; when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of his glory; and when the multitudes of them that believe, shall be of one heart and of one soul, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

W. H.

STRATHBLANE MANSE, Jan. 4th, 1830.