

them as such,—and derive all the advantage from them, by using them properly—which they were meant to afford (John 5: 29). Were we without them as a light to our feet—and a lamp to our path, how great and gross would be the darkness through which we should have to grope! uncertainty and doubt would surround us on every side,—and difficulty and danger would be our attendant portion. Most miserable and pitiable would then be our condition,—without a true knowledge of God,—and without hope in the world. Having no sure ground to rest our foot upon, our speculations on futurity, and our state in it, would but terminate in absurdity and error. The immortal soul ever striving after the truth—yet never obtaining possession of it, and not even knowing with certainty the answer to the question—Why am I thus?

The inspired oracles of truth—our glorious Gospel, sets our mind at rest on the most important questions with which we have to do in this world,—it satisfies the conscience by revealing to us as much of God's will as He has been pleased that we shall now know,—and describing the line of conduct we have to pursue which shall be well-pleasing to Him. To doubt any doctrine of Scripture, then, because it may disagree with opinions already formed on the subject, which may seem more in accordance with the dictates of reason,—or which may be more pleasing to human nature,—or to disbelieve any statement of them, because it may be different from, or even contrary to our experience of things, is assuming to ourselves a power not granted us by their Author,—and if we persist in maintaining it, will undoubtedly lead us to ruin. Our present experience of things is not sufficient ground for us to judge of the inscrutable workings of God, any more than our finite faculties are able fully to comprehend His infinite attributes. Let then the approach to the very verge of unbelief be shunned with fear and abhorrence,—for if even one single doubt about a statement of the truth of God be entertained—the person who holds it has no further safeguard that he shall not come in time to deny the Lord who has bought him with His blood,—or even to say with the fool —“There is no God.” The blinding of the mind to the rejection of the truth as it is in Jesus is the work of the god of this world, in order that he may secure the infidel to himself. And in order to effect this, different roots of unbelief are planted by him in different minds, so that their particular constitutions may favour the peculiar growths. Is not the leading and fundamental doctrine of human depravity—guilt and helplessness, denied by some individuals?—Do not others reject the grand doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ?—Others set aside the great atonement made by His death on the cross—and “go about to establish their own righteousness” for justification;—others profanely maintain that the influences of the Holy Spirit

are not necessary in arousing us to a just sense of our undone condition, and making us free for safety to the foot of the cross,—but that such pious wishes and desires for the safety and welfare of our soul, spring up spontaneously within us;—others endeavour to find out discrepancies, and pretend to discover fallacies among the several statements of Scripture—and thus to question the inspiration of them;—and others pervert the meaning of certain passages in order to suit particular creeds to which they are partial. Such conduct is certainly very sinful—and cannot meet the approbation of Him, who has given us the Holy Scriptures for a very different purpose than to be abused in this way. It is by those to whom our Gospel is hid, who treat it in this profane way,—who endeavour to make it justify their own peculiar tenets instead of submitting themselves to be directed and governed by its teaching. The strictest attention is therefore indispensably necessary to be given to its injunctions before any one can be benefitted by them,—for if such is not done, loose principles must follow as a result,—and their sure fruit is loose practices,—hence forgetfulness of, and disrespect to God,—neglect of enjoined duties, especially of the Gospel Ordinances,—advancement in immorality,—and ultimately the loss of the immortal soul. Whence proceeds Sabbath profanation,—drunkenness,—swearing,—cheating,—lying, and the many other vices which disgrace those who practice them—and if persisted in, will bring down the dire punishment of God upon the guilty heads of the delinquents?—Is it not because they do not respect the Holy Scriptures,—and because they will not be influenced and guided by their directions?

Our Gospel—the glorious Gospel of Christ demands respect to be given it;—it claims a right to be heard and obeyed—promising to be to all who do so, the savour of life unto life,—but to all who do not, the savour of death unto death. This pure light has come into the world from heaven,—a light to lighten the world—with whose cheering beams, every one who is not illuminated must be in great darkness.

Given by God for our greatest good, our glorious Gospel ought to have one of the chief places in our estimation and affection, since its importance and value are so great. To it we owe the chief religious knowledge which we possess—even the true knowledge of Him, who is the sure and solid foundation on which we build our hopes for salvation;—to it we also owe in a great measure the high position the nation to which we belong holds among the other nations of the world;—and to it we owe most of our civil and domestic blessings. Upon our Gospel is true morality founded,—upon it are formed right conceptions of our duty to God—to our neighbour—and to ourselves,—and upon it we lay a true foundation for our happiness here and hereafter. Strange