

which it is argued that a man may fall from sanctification and from saving grace. The whole, however, is a mere caution against apostacy from our professions, and does not teach that any will thus despise the blood of the covenant. If we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, &c.

REPLY.—The words, “If we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth,” had reference to the converted Jews. If they fell away to such an extent as to deny that Christ was the true Messiah, there could be no more sacrifice for sin. Ordinary backsliders may be reclaimed as David and Peter were.

TREATISE.—*Objection xv.*—“A man may escape the pollutions of the present world and afterwards fall away,” &c. 2 Pet. ii. 20. All this may be said of those who are only externally reformed from the infidelity, vice and immorality of the world, and have a speculative head knowledge of the way of righteousness. That such persons may and do fall away we do not doubt. That these persons were not changed in heart. That their nature never was renewed is evident from the comparison used by the Apostle on the subject. He compares them to a “sow that was washed returning to her wallowing in the mire.” The nature of the animal was not changed; though externally washed, her appetites remained the same; she was a sow still. Had her nature been changed to that of a sheep, she would never have returned.

REPLY.—2 Peter, 11, 20. “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein ‘and overcome,’ the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

Mark the next verse particularly, 21st verse. For it had been better for them not to have known “the way of righteousness”