

ses and John the Baptist; for upon the principle they approved and practised the same morality, no such heresy could have found either name nor place.

But to return: John the Baptist, soon as he is manifest to Israel, or is made known to the people of Judea as a messenger of the Lord, becomes eminent both as a preacher and as a reformer.—His sermons indeed are principally designed to correct and reform. The children of faithful Abraham—the chosen tribes and the beloved people—had, as a nation, become as the degenerate stock from a strange vine. The law of Moses, although regarded as divine, was acknowledged only in ceremony, and human teachings and human expedients were as popular and as authoritative as the most worldly priest could devise or desire. Among this people, John, the promised Elijah, is sent; and his work is to prepare them for the coming of the Lord. His mission—his preaching—his dress—his exhortations—his manners—are all new. The people flock to him in crowds, and to all who come, he boldly says, ‘Repent—forsake your sins—renew your lives. Call yourselves no longer the children of Abraham to conceal your iniquity—the Lord is at hand, and his judgments also are near—repent of your sins—believe these things—and reform.’

These things are tolerated until King Herod himself is reprov- ed by the bold preacher. The Scribes, Elders, and Pharisees, had long been convinced of the heresy of the Baptist, but Herod and other members of the royal family have the honor of imprisoning and putting him to death. The details are unnecessary. His virtue and courage cost him his life. He is beheaded, and his head made the pleasing present of Herod’s adulterous wife! Such was the doom of this heretic!

And what shall we say of him who was “despised and rejected of men:” “the Lord of glory,” yet “a man of sorrows;” “the son of the living God,” yet “bearing our griefs;” “the Savior of sinners,” yet called “Beelzebub the prince of devils;” “Immanuel, God with us,” yet “stricken, smitten, and afflicted;” “God’s beloved son,” yet “hated,” “persecuted,” “condemned,” “crucified.” Yes, this Divine One, full of grace and full of truth, in whom Jehovah delighted, was by the Jewish people rejected as a heretic, and suffered every indignity that hatred and persecuting authority could inflict. Here is heresy that is not, cannot be, ought not to be, described! We pass it by. The picture is too awfully grand. A bleeding savior, whose benevolence had been reviled, whose miracles of goodness were misrepresented and slandered, whose labors of love defamed and calumniated, and whose purity and matchless character were virtually the reasons of his condemnation and death; there is some something so sublimely paradoxical, so many inexpressible contradictions, and so