No. 160.

Sin considered as hostility to God.
Romans VIII. 7. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

This is a passage of Scripture, as like many other passages, is often used without meaning, or in a false meaning. Nothing can be more simple, plain, than the sense in which the Apostle used it, or nothing more strange than the sense which has been given to it in connection with human systems. It has been considered as a general description of the state of man, when it is in fact only the statement of a particular truth. By "the carnal mind" the Apostle has been supposed to represent the natural state of mankind, when it has been inferred that all mankind come into the world enemies to God, a condition from which it is impossible they should ever be rescued except by the special interposition of that God.
who has placed them in that condition. Now it would be difficult to select a proportion with which reality our text has less to do. Yet with this: of that such an application should have been made of it is only one of the many lamentable instances of the perversion of God's word. Much dispute would be prevented, if we would but apply rational and correct principles to the interpretation of Scripture. When we have once received a doctrine as an article of belief on whatever grounds, we are disposed to find it in a thousand passages, where nothing could be further from the design of the sacred writers, where we ourselves should have astonished that we had ever been able to find it, nor it not for the effects of prejudice or early education. Our opinions may be true or not, but we should not seek to gather true or proper evidence, but seek to gather evidence for them from places, wherever we designed to afford them support. Thus, whether the opinion before mentioned, as having been inferred fr
the text, be well founded or not. I will not now undertake to say; but I do say, that it is not an opinion warranted or supported by this passage. This habit of creating doctrines on texts of Scripture cannot uphold them, were not meant to uphold them, has many bad effects. It spreads an 

fusing uncertainty over the word of God, it induces 

many rational minds, unacquainted with the sub-

ject, to turn away from the whole on disgust, 

weariness. Scripture is turned into an arsenal of 

weapons for controversialists; these most often use 

each other seized upon the same texts of the pure 

atmosphere around the source of divine truth, it 

should be clear, bright, refreshing, is dashed 

with the arrows of angry disputants, shooting 

in every direction, filling us with distressing 

uncertainty & painful feelings of disgust. And be-

sides, this habit of mistaking or perverting Scrip-
ture has a bad influence on others, who indulge 
in it. If they knew this mistake of its good use for the 

sake of supporting a party continue in it, they of
course the compels, it is use deception & fraud, thinking more surely than this, breaks down every false sense of reverence for the word of God, if they do not know their mistake. They will go on in a blinded, a headless way to derive any thing they please from any passage they please in Scripture; or, if they discover their mistake, have honesty enough to abandon it, they will experience that sense of uncertainty wh we generally feel when we find that we have been building up opinions on other foundations, where falling is mostfallaciously. The mind in such cases is very afe to turn away in suspicion, if because it has been deceived, is disposed never to trust again. Skepticism is very often the consequence of confused or injudicious belief. In short, the mind will feel the unhappy effects of making proof texts for certain opinions, if these passages are never and designed to have even a remote allusion to them. I now proceed to give you the meaning of my text.
The expression "carnal mind" signifies "vicious mind," a mind given up to corrupt passions & propensity. The word translated "carnal" was used by the Hebrews & the Hebrews Greeks, to express the sense of weak degraded, polluted, sensual. Thus we see the Apostle meant to assert, that wickedness is hostility against God. This is a plain & simple truth, unclouded by skepticism, unclouded by philosophy, unclouded by controversy about the nature of man. How much more beautiful & attractive would the Bible appear, if we would but be content with its original, unadulterated sense, not polluting it by substituting our own conceptions & speculations.

The proposition then which I deduce from the text is that wickedness is enmity against God, that the mind enslaved to vice is in a state of hostility against the Most High. This is true in the fullest extent of its meaning. And let me add, it is a truth which displays the enormity of vice in most striking & impressive colours. It shows us our condition as a ruinous, trifling thing, but as a system of warfare against the perfections & purposes of the Maker of the
Universe. We are not sufficiently in the habit of considering the subject in this solemn and important light. Nor, is it true, will have the卤der to stand forth as the advocate of vice, the defender of corruption. But the heart is easily persuaded to think lightly of the blame of that, as it would by no means justify. It is not uncommon to hear vice justified on this with that he's of pleasantness, which amounts to ost of half approbation. It is regarded not as a subject of serious indignation, but as something to be laughed at and made sport with. Or, at the worst, perhaps, it is considered as an injury to the individual who commits it, as detrimental to his interest, she is thought to be his own worst enemy. But, my father has learned to allow of such failings for vice to view it as no such light or trifling thing. To his mind, it is presented in a much more awful form, it stands before his sight not merely as ridiculous, contemptible, derogatory to man, but as enmity against God, as a violation of the laws, an assault on the majesty of heaven. When he sees me,
She gives herself up as a victim to vice. She feels not only regret for the dreadful consequences to which the unhappy man is exposing himself, but contempt for the degradation to which he submits, but she shudders to think that this wretched being is raising his impious hand in rebellion against the Most High God. If, therefore, there is something awful and touching in this consideration, is not the man who habitually keeps it before him, cannot find it in his heart to make vice a pleasant jest, or a topic of gay diversion, he will always feel it to be a serious and dreadful thing to resort to for amusement.

Let us glance at some of these considerations, wherein to show, that sin is hostility against God. In this sense, it is directly opposed to the purposes of the Almighty, evidently has an interest in the government of the world. It involves a destruction what He intended to be a fair and glorious work. By all that we can gather from the works of word of the Al. it appears, that the grand and ultimate objects of all his operations is moral good. The indications of this are so

unerring. Things seem to be arranged with
a view to call forth, to exercise or to strengthen virtue. 
Toll, endurance, kindness, submission, gratitude, are 
continually called for, as the appropriate results of 
the system of things ordained by God. This world itself 
was apparently formed for a residence to train up 
man to goodness. It is full of excitments of objects 
for the better or worse parts of our nature: it offers 
abundant matter to cherish highly elevating senti-
ments. The footsteps of God, in the agency of His 
mercy and will, are manifest upon it. Nature, as 
far as we are acquainted with it, is but the title 
to the volume of God's praise. Not a mountain rises 
itself, that does not present an altar to this glori-
ous mystery: not a river rolls its waters to the ocean, that 
does not pour abroad the treasures of His goodness. 
Man is placed in the midst of these wonders, may 
do tell me not, that his heart shall not know 
the view. What, though he sees some objects, 
which inflict pain or present difficulties, - nature has 
evils mingled in her composition? Why should not even 
these be thrown in by the hand of a well-pleasing 
my. He knows what is good for us better than
we know ourselves. He sees that they call into exercise all the virtues connected with industry, caution, sympathy. He cannot gain advantages without the use of means. He cannot reap without sowing the seed, cultivating the ground, waiting for the harvest; this seems to be a general principle. This nature seems adapted to instill into men the great lesson of virtue in one shape or another, to compel us to learn that lesson. And if you turn your eyes to the course of life, you will there too find moral good to be the end and aim. Man is disciplined by trouble, storms by the events of life's providence. The word is the summary, &c., to form & mature these principles & virtues, &c., &c. May fit us for a higher state of existing.
 cliente, that from our tastes, & desires. Thus we see
life is designed by God to be a moral teacher. We come
next to the revelation of God's will. Of that there-
forms object is the promotion of moral & spiritual
eye have there the purest precepts, the brightest ex-
amples, the most powerful sanctions. It was in the
great design of effecting moral renovation, improve-
ment, that God sent that Messenger, who was a
ray of His brightness & the representative of His per-
fected & all that Jesus did & suffered, while teaching
the way of truth & proclaiming the will of God
et, had a strictly moral purpose, was designed to ef-
fect moral good. I have made this brief notice
in order to show you that from nature, from the course
of life, from revelation there issues the same hel-
monious voice, a voice that declares that that
object of His government to be the production of
al good, the educating mean to virtue. Now the
truth for which I have made this sketch, is to impress
it upon your minds, that wise is hostility against
the All. Because it is directed against that, which
is the end object of His government, moral good.
God is labouring, if I may so speak, for the production of virtue, has arranged the universe, natural moral to do this mighty work, vice comes in, and its own way against this gracious plan, this glorious purpose; may not vice then be justly denounced? Open rebellion against the Most High! Was not the Apostle justified in saying, that the carnal mind, the depraved heart, is enmity against God? Most surely it is enmity of the bitterest kind; it is enmity against the object of deepest kind; it is enmity against the means; it practically puts enmity against the end. Oh God has in view and strives to defeat the methods. Oh He in infinite wisdom makes use of to accomplish these ends. Make the dread ful supposition that it should for once gain the triumph, what would be the consequence. It would spread pollution over the works of the Creator's hand. What is now bright, glorious, fair, would become dark, distorted, loathsome; no voice of praise or gratitude would ascend from the depths of nature; prosperity would become a mere scene of
writers extravagance, giving heat to passion, en-
flammation to corrupt desire, feeding evil passions,
destroying man the tyrant of oppressor of man;—sadvi-
sity instead of being the strengthening of virtue, by
whose hand she may grow brighter & brighter, would
become the source of hardened & malignant feelings;
the mind would run the texture itself under suf-
ferring & all its bad passions would receive new strength
all its restless desires would rage the more as they
were chained. In proportion as vice does prevail, it
actually produces some degree of these dreadful
effects. So it met then enmity against God; is it
met a blot stain on the purity of his works? de-
signs?—truly it is not only subject to the law of God
I cannot be. 2. Sin is enmity against God because it
hinders the happiness of man; the happiness of this crea-
ture is the favorite object of our Heav. Father. All
that are known of the Heav. confines to teach us, that
His goodness points to the felicity of man as one
of the darling objects of its exercise. If it didn't
look too much like monopolizing selfishness we
might almost say that nature is a grand system
means to promote the felicity of rational beings. But how does God design to impart happiness to his creature, man? Solely by making him virtuous. And there is no other way of being happy. Well being is linked to good doing, and the connection is inseparable. Vice then is the enemy of God, because it is opposed to this way of making man happy, the only way with infinite wisdom & goodness have seen fit to adopt. As it strives to rob us of that felicity which is in the nature & constitution of things as meant for us. And so far as it succeeds, it does actually rob us. I cannot point again to so fruitful a source of wretchedness in this world as sin; indeed there is in truth no real unhappiness, but that which flows from this source, other miseries being generally imaginary, or at least temporary & partial. But to the misery of vice there is one pollution from it there is no escape. It spreads its bitterness through the heart, while it rules, murdering the best happiness can reside there. Observe the curse of the deceiver to vice. Follow him from the benefits of guilty pleasure, & follow him to the returns of
to his heart. If you can see & know his immortal thoughts & feelings, you must regard them as an object of pity, instead of envy; as wormwood, the broken fragments of what he should have been, and most precious & lovely, & honourable; as then, the worm gnaws at his heart; he can find no comfort in the present; he scarcely dares to look back on the past, for conscience has there a dreadful record of broken resolutions, of sanctionations to present, & of the future he turns away with fearful apprehensions. These sad consequences are produced, in age, the heart is so thrown into that hardened state, as it is as stretched as the sufferings I have described. Thus sin is enmity against God, because it destroys the happiness of man; as it is the gracious Providence of God, to establish on the foundation of ages, on the foundation of virtue, the foundation of virtue.

B. Once more: vice is hostility against God, because it is directly expressly contrary to the manifestations of His will in this holy word. From every page of Scripture, you hear the voice of the All-
declaring his stern displeasure against the
wokers of iniquity. The prophet represents a
saying, 'Thou shalt shew all miser-
ity to the prophets, rising early and sending
the saying, O! do not this abominable thing
the abominable thing that I hate.' Sin, says, is the abominable thing that
I hate. This he has declared throughout his
word. Without holiness no man shall see the
Lord: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'
'Therefore now thus saith the L. the God of hosts:
wherefore commit ye this great evil against
your souls?' These declarations are manifesta-
tions in the past of Jehovah, that witness to the
law of his government, so that as He regards
as warfare against himself. Suppose a system
of laws to be framed for the conduct of the citi-
zens of a state, to be issued or made known by the
authority of the land; what would you think
of that man, who should violate them heed-
lessly and wilfully, who should even seek occa-
sions of transgressing, or in the face of the ruling
powers should open contempt on the declare
hans? Would you regard him as a friend of an
ever to the state? - as a good citizen, or a false
dreaded citizen? - When you have answered
this question, you may then decide as what
right you would regard the man, who over
transgresses the known command of God,
published as His laws to the world, - who goes
on from day to day, defying omnipotence, defying
the commands of infinite wisdom & goodness.
Our surely must consider him as an enemy
to the Most High. - There is to be seen an in-
credible difference in the importance of the two
cases I have stated; but in the same prin-
ciples, I leave it to declare as man an enemy
to the state in the one case, you must declare him
to be hostile to the Ruler of the Universe in the
other.

These considerations will just open to you a few
of the reasons why sin is declared to be enmity to
God. I must leave it to your own reflections
prove them. - I will add a few words on the
closing part of the text. - For it is not subject
to the law of God, neither indeed can I be; For these words some have inferred that the sinner has no moral power of reformation, that it is only by a immediate exertion of divine power that he can be lifted out of this state of deep degradation. This however is very remote from the meaning of the Apostle; he says nothing at all about man's ability or inability. He says, merely, that sin is not conformable to the government of God, or never can be. We are thus told that wherever or however sine appears, there is too much of warfare against God, so that it never can be otherwise. So long as God remains what he is, sin remains what it is; it must be the abominable thing that Jehovah hates: for it is the confusion of stain & pollution of His moral creation. So long as the All. sits on his eternal throne & legislates for the universe, so long as the laws which unerring wisdom has established shall continue to govern worlds on worlds, so long as the moral nature of man, as a rational & account
able; being continues the same, - so long the
will be an irreconcilable hostility between
the Rules of the universe. The only way to do
this hostility is to destroy sin; for it is an evil
that must be allowed no quarter. Nays, en-
encourage any vice in our own breasts? do we see
talking abroad as in every form? - Oh, Sir,
I protest you regard it as a slight, a mean, a
thing! - deem it no trifling to raise your hand
to encourage others in raising their hand in
fear against the Eternal Jehovah. The voice of
ture in all levelsness calls upon us to aban-
don this hostility; conscience calls upon us to aban-
Scripture calls upon us to abandon it; - God
from whom calls upon us to abandon it.

Sept. 1822.

At home, Oct. 6th, 1822 - forenoon.
At home, March 18, 1832 - afternoon - very thin.