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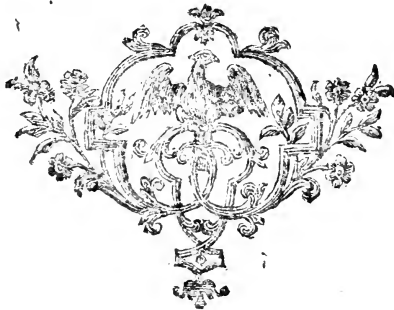
Several Subjects.

By RICHARD TAYLOR, M. A.

Prepar'd for the PRESS by the AUTHOR.

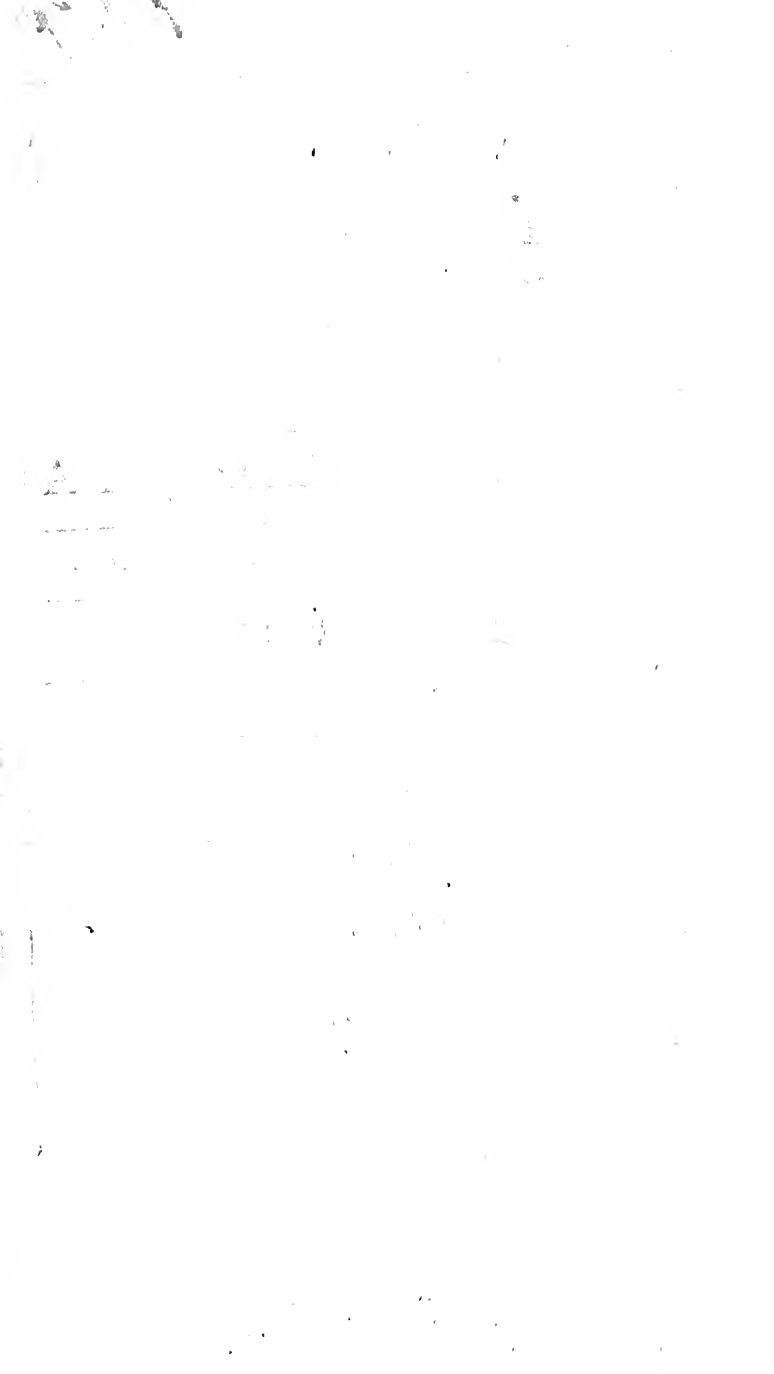
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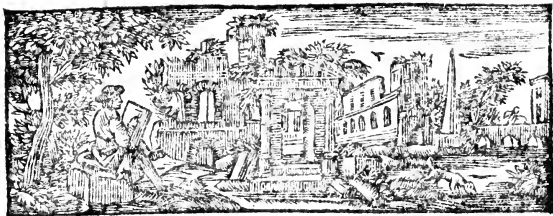
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T H E
P R E F A C E.



W H E N men in their degenerate state are at the greatest variance among themselves, because they thwart one another in the pursuit of their raging lusts, they can all agree, to deny the whole glory of the salvation of sinners to the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ, and with great vanity of mind take some part of it to themselves.

When this is the temper which is predominant in all men, as they are depraved, he that does any thing which is quite contrary to their strain,

and crosses them in their blasphemous attempt, cannot be without a previous apprehension, that his labours are so far from being like to meet with any great acceptation, that they will be invidiously slighted by most, especially in our age, wherein a departure from truth is become so universal, that they who in defiance of it openly plead for error, are in a ready way to become the worlds darlings and favourites. The boldest invasions are now made upon the most weighty Gospel-truths, and the light which shined in the first Reformation is so darkened, that many either return to the fogs and mists of *Popish* errors, or list themselves among the followers of *Socinus*, who effectually prepare the way for the Deists, who reject all revealed religion.

When this is the present deplorable state of things amongst us, it is high time for every one, to whom Christ is become pretious and honourable, to appear and stand up in defence of his
Go-

Gospel. It was said by a divinely inspired writer, that there must be heresies, 1 Cor. xi. 19. *There must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest.* Heresies are often permitted to come, that the faithful followers of Christ may appear to be upright, when they are tried, and that at the same time un-sound professors may be discovered; but when heresies are most rampant, they must not pass uncontradicted, and altho they have such a full possession of the hearts of men by nature, that the most vigorous opposition which can be made against them is often too feeble to stop their spreading, yet this must not discourage us in our duty, but must rather the more animate us to put on the whole armour of light, that we may earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the Saints.

There are too many (even among them from whom we might look for some honesty, if not for zeal and purity)

who hold the truth in prison as a captive, and dare say nothing for it to purpose, lest they should forfeit their small share of esteem and reputation in the world: When in their heads they are for the truth, at least so far as to please the party on whom they have a slavish dependence, their deceitful hearts will not give them leave to be vouchers for it, because they have not the courage to run the risque of popular frowns: When they should make their worldly interest bend to their conscience, they force their conscience, if they have any, to be a vassal to their secular advantage: When they can with a glowing heat seek what is for their own profit in this life, moderation with them must have no place, but only in giving up all that which belongs to God, and here they will allow it to be boundless. This sort of temporizers are exceeding careful to cover their own remissions, that it may neither be perceived nor upbraided, and therefore they are very forward

ward to disparage what others do, when they have neither application of mind, nor integrity of heart to do any thing themselves. It is a sad account, that such betrayers of Christ will have to give to God the judge of all, when they shall be forced to see for their confusion, that no way of merchandize in the end will be so gainful, as that where truth is bought, but never exposed to sale.

When persons are unresolved and unsettled in their belief, and when they vary their opinions according to the times wherein they live, and the occasions that are presented to them, which suit their secular interest, they are guilty of a woful indifference and lukewarmness in the things of God and their salvation, they trifle about the most serious things, and are careless about the eternal welfare of their souls, when their salvation should be the object of their greatest care: This lukewarmness is most dangerous; for if it be only partial and temporary, it

will bring great shame and sorrow, and if it brings persons to a total and a final apostacy, it will end in their eternal ruin and perdition.

Men of selfish tempers, either will not stand to the profession which they have made, or they will make no profession, lest they should be bound to stand to it; they will hold nothing, because they will be under no obligation to abide by any thing.

There is a rule of patience, forbearance, meekness and love, which should be observed by all persons, towards such as differ from them in judgment and practice; they should approve of them wherein they do well, and pity them wherein they think they err, and leave them to their judge; but the most extensive moderation towards them that have different opinions and sentiments, is not contrary to, but consistent with a resolute adherence to what is believed to be of a divine original and institution. When persons hold fast the profession of their faith,
they

they must be moderate towards others who differ from them; but the pretence of moderation must not be brought as a plea to justify or excuse indifference in belief, or a giving free quarter to errors. When a man is unresolved in his faith and unstable in his ways, he does not then act from a principle of Christian moderation, but from a trimming politic spirit, that he may secure his worldly interest, and provide for his outward safety in all weathers.

It is always a selfish principle and a worldly spirit, that keeps men from a profession of their faith: When they plead, that if they believe the truth, it is sufficient, altho' they make no open declaration of it, their drift in this plea is, that they may fall in with any religion that has the common vogue, and the countenance of the civil magistrate, whether they apprehend it to have a divine institution, or only to be the device of a despotic imposing humour. When men conceal their
faith,

faith, and choose to be masqued Christians, they then act from sinful fear and self-love, and they do not favour the things that are of God; and their example, if it should be followed universally, would fill the world with Atheism, and would bring men to be time-servers and hypocrites in the most weighty and sacred things.

It is the duty of every Christian to make a profession of his faith, or to cleave and stick to such doctrines as, upon due conviction from the light and the authority of the word of God, he has believed and embraced; and the nearer any truth is to the foundation, and the more it refers to the vitals of Christianity, the more he ought to strive to hold it fast, and the greater zeal he should have to maintain and defend it. It is a breach of a man's allegiance to God, when he lets any known truth go, but he should distinguish between truths that are essential to Christianity, and truths that relate to the external order and form of religion.

gion. One thing whereby a true Christian may be known from a hypocrite is this; a true Christian undervalues no truth, but his heart is primarily engaged to look after the greatest truths, the more momentous and necessary truths are, the greater concernment he has for them; but when a hypocrite glows with heat about things which pertain only to the externals of religion, he has no regard to the truths of the gospel, wherein the power of godliness consists. When the fire of mens zeal burns hot only about truths that are remote from the life of faith, and when they are indifferent, and have a neutral spirit about the truth of Christ's eternal Godhead, justification by his righteousness, sanctification by his Spirit, and other truths that contain the marrow of Christianity, they may be justly censured to be like foolish builders, who make a noise about the painting and ornature of the house, when they have not taken one step to lay the foundation. Persons who are
of

of this spirit, and who are under the reigning influence of it, are but superficial and not real Christians; it may be said of them that it is faction and not truth, humour and not judgment, a wild imagination and not faith that guides them; and when under a pretence of being elevated in their knowledge, they entertain mean thoughts of foundation-truths, they then give proofs of their unsoundness, and all their religion will evaporate into airy conceits.

The practice of such neuters and time-servers, as I have described, is that which, through divine assistance, I am so far from being tempted to follow as a pattern, that I have ventured to run counter to the rules of their policy, in bearing witness to the truth. It is the glory of God's grace, as it is absolutely free, that I seek to retrieve from the incroachments of erroneous men, and it is the power of grace, as it is that only which can make us holy, that I plead for. In handling the several

veral doctrinal points, which I have endeavoured to prove and explain, I have avoided any contest with particular persons: The drift of what I have attempted, is to establish such doctrines, as I think in my own conscience, to be the fundamental truths of the Gospel, and of the greatest consequence to the souls of men.

I can expect nothing but bitter rage, contempt, and division from the crowd of the first *Adam's* off-spring, while they are alienated from God, who is the fountain of light and life, but this ought not to surprize me, because I am informed out of the word of God, that the far greatest part of men go in the broad way that leads to destruction. When the greatest numbers walk in the broad way, it is not possible, so long as they are not turned out of it, that they will befriend the truth: Truth has so unkind a reception among the generality of men, that a dissent from the most numerous party, much rather than union with it, is a test of orthodoxy. The

The censure of most is what I expect, but I hope what I have said upon several important truths, will find an approbation in the consciences of them, who experimentally know what it is to be saved by grace, and to have Christ to be the author, preserver, and finisher of their faith. If what I have said be blessed of God, to contribute any thing either to bring sinners under a sense of their great misery by nature, or to render Christ more desirable, beautiful, glorious, and excellent in the eyes of believers, I shall have my chief end answered.

I shall add no more, but leave the seed of the truth that I have sown in great weakness, to the care of him that can raise it up in power, that so it may spring up unto eternal life, in them upon whom it may fall.

RICHARD TAYLOR.

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THE greatest part of the following discourses were by the Author prepared for the Press about eleven years ago; those, *Of the mysteriousness of the Gospel-revelation; of the simplicity of Christianity; and, of Heresy;* were composed since the rest. The Reader may be assured, that these discourses were designed for publication, and fitted for the Press by the Author himself, on which account, they are not to be set in the same rank with most posthumous pieces, which mercenary persons too often thrust into the world, to the disparagement of them whose names they bear.

THE



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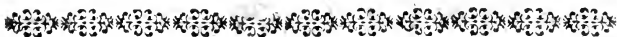
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E P H E S. II. 8.

*By Grace are ye saved, through
Faith; and that not of your
selves: it is the Gift of God.*

HEN the apostle had given a description of the state of all men by nature, which is a most miserable state, he then shews how it is only by the grace of God that any of them, who are in this deplorable

A 2 ble

4 *Of Salvation for*

ble condition, come to be saved; he mentioneth the grace of God by way of parenthesis, in the 5th verse, as it is the sovereign cause of our salvation; he repeats it in the words of the text, as it is not only the primary and ultimate cause of our salvation, but as it is the sole cause of it, or as it is the cause of our salvation, exclusive of all other things, which men through the pride of their hearts, would mingle with it either as coordinate or subordinate causes of their salvation.

The causality of grace in our salvation, as it altogether excludes all that is in a man's self, from being any cause of it, hath been both strenuously opposed and greatly corrupted in all ages of the world; and it never was more darkened and confounded, than it has been and still is by the Papists and such as join with them, to obscure the glory of the grace of God, as it is the cause of our salvation in all things belonging to it, whether they be the *prima*, *media* or *ultima* of it.

When many deny the grace of God to have the prime causality in our salvation, and when all men are apt to mix something of their own with the grace of God, as a
par-

partial cause or condition of their salvation; the apostle thought it necessary and fit in a small compass to say twice, *By grace are ye saved*, that the repetition and inculcation of the same thing might effectually secure us against the dangerous errors which are incident to all men in their now fallen state, and that it might make a deeper and more induring impresson on our souls of this great truth, which is the sum of the whole gospel, .viz. Our salvation from first to last, or in all the parts and degrees of it, is only from the grace of God. Grace is the *alpha* and *omega* in our salvation.

There are four things in the words to be noted by us.

I. Salvation, which is most desireable in it self, and ought to be desired above all things, by lost sinners; *Ye are saved.*

II. The spring or fountain from whence the salvation of sinners comes: This is the grace of God; *By grace ye are saved.*

III. The channel through which salvation comes to us, when we are made partakers of it: This is faith; *Ye are saved through faith.*

IV. Faith which receives salvation, is not from any thing in our selves, but it is as

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purely the gift of grace as our salvation is, which faith receives; *And that not of your selves, it is the gift of God.* It may be observ'd how the apostle absolutely shuts out every thing that is in a sinner, from being so much as the bare instrumental cause of salvation.

Faith that receives salvation is not of, or from, our selves. *Θεὸν τὸ δῶρον, it is the gift of God.* The words according to the grammatical form and reading of them, may refer both to salvation and to faith. Salvation is a gift, and faith that receives it is also a gift. Salvation is not only a gift, but faith that applies and receives it, is also the gift of god.

God as he acts towards us in a way of Grace is both the object of our faith and the author of it.

1. He is the object of our faith: when a man believes, his heart is carry'd from earth to heaven, and set upon God.

2. God is the author of our faith. Faith is the gift of God; he begets and preserves it in the soul: as the light spreads it self into the air to enlighten and beautify it, when the sun appears; so when God comes into the soul by his spirit, he works faith in it to receive Christ and salvation through him.

When

When God shines into the soul of a sinner by his spirit, he gives the sinner a spiritual eye to behold the glory and excellency of Christ, and the sinner then sees infinite loveliness in Christ to cover his deformity, and infinite righteousness to hide his guilt.

It is from the first part of the verse, that I shall discourse; *By grace are ye saved.*

The observation which I shall raise from the words is this,

The Salvation of sinners is from the grace of God.

In handling this truth I shall do six things:

I. I shall shew what salvation is.

II. I shall shew what the grace of God is, by which sinners are saved.

III. I shall shew how glorious the grace of God is, which is the cause of salvation.

IV. I shall shew why the salvation of sinners is only by grace.

V. I shall prove that our falvation in the intire fyftem, and in the whole contexture of it, is only from the grace of God.

VI. I shall apply the truth.



C H A P. I.

What Salvation is.

I Shall fhew what the falvation of finners is, which is from the grace of God.

Salvation is all the good that we can either desire or enjoy; damnation is not more terrible above our fears, than falvation is glorious above our faith and hopes: Salvation incircles in it all the good that perfects our blessedness; it is all that God, as a Redeemer, either doth for us or works in us.

There are two things in our falvation to be consider'd.

I. In our falvation there is a deliverance from all evil, and from the greatest evil
Sal-

Salvation is a deliverance from the evil of sin, and from the evil of punishment.

1. It is a deliverance from the evil of sin in its guilt and filth, in its power and dominion. When God saves us, he pardons our sins, delivers us from bondage, and heals our spiritual maladies.

2. It is a deliverance from the evil of punishment. When we are saved, we are then delivered from a gulph of misery into which we should sink eternally, if we were not saved by grace.

II. In our salvation there is the enjoyment of all that which is superlatively good. When we are saved, we are not only redeemed from the greatest evil, but we are brought to enjoy every thing which is superlatively good. Salvation in this respect is twofold.

1. It is that which God doth for us.

2. It is that which God works in us.

1. Salvation is that which God doth for us, when he chooseth us in Christ, makes us heirs of heaven, justifies and accepts our persons, and gives us a right and title to heaven. Believers already are as fully and perfectly saved in this sense, as ever they will be saved ; they are now as fully
ly

ly and perfectly chosen in Christ, adopted, justified, and entitled to eternal Life, as they can be when they come to heaven; their present title and right to heaven and their propriety in it, is as sure, valid, and perfect, as it will be, when they shall enter into the fulness of their master's joy.

2. Salvation is that which God works in us, when he gives us his Spirit to renew, quicken, sanctifie, and strengthen us for all acts of obedience. This salvation is that which God works in us by degrees, till it be perfected in heaven.

This salvation which God works in us, is possessed by us, and yet it is in faith and hope.

(1.) It is a salvation possess'd by us in part. The work of God in us, when we are regenerated and sanctified, is salvation obtain'd.

We may from the first moment that God quickens and makes us new creatures; be said to have salvation in possession: We have that which is salvation in part, and is in regard of a perfect salvation, as the seed-time is to the Harvest.

(2.) It is salvation in hope and expectation, if it be considered in its fulness and perfection.

A compleat conformity to God in holiness, and a perfect immediate fruition of him in heaven, is that salvation which we have in faith and hope. It is to this salvation that we make a nearer approach every day, than when we first believed. *Rom. xiii. 11. For now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed.* When the salvation which we now have in faith and hope is once consummated in respect of our actual enjoyment of it in heaven, then our faith and hope will spread themselves as drops in the wide ocean of eternal vision and fruition.

Salvation is of a large Extent, because it infolds in it all the good, which is in a state of grace, and in a state of Glory. To be saved, is not only to be deliver'd from sin, and to be redeem'd from hell; but it is also to be elected in Christ, to be made heirs of heaven, to be justified, to be born again, to be changed into the Image of God, to be beautified with higher degrees of holiness, and at last to be brought to a kingdom of glory, where there will be a perfection of happiness, and where happiness in its perfection will be eternally perpetuated.





C H A P. II.

*What the Grace of God is, by
which Sinners are saved.*

I Shall shew what the grace of God is, by which sinners are saved. It is the love or good will of God towards them in Christ. Grace may be said to be two-fold.

I. Grace is that which is *Gratia gratum faciens*.

II. Grace is that which is *Gratia gratis data*.

I. Grace is that which is *Gratia gratum faciens*.

This is the love which is in God towards us, and moves him to give all good to us. It hath no impulsive cause out of God, but is his own good will. It is his free favour that elects us in Christ, and breaks
forth

forth in acts of kindness towards us. It is no Quality infused into us, but it is in God himself: The elect are the objects of this grace, but they are not the subjects of it: It acts towards them, but it is not in them. This Grace which is immanent in God, is the cause of the very gift of Christ, and of all the good things which come to us through him: It is the spring of all the good which we receive from God in time, and that we shall be partakers of in eternity: All the good that God doth for us, all the good that he works in us, and all the blessings which he gives to us, are so many streams from this fountain.

II. Grace is that which is *Gratia gratis data*.

This is the grace which God freely gives to us through Christ. Of this grace we are the subjects: It is not by this grace that we are saved, but this grace is our salvation: It is not that grace which saves us as the first original cause of our salvation, but it is the gift of that grace which hath the sovereign causality in our salvation. This grace is distinguish'd from the grace which is immanent in God, as it is the gift of it, *Rom. v. 25. If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the*
grace

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grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. The Apostle here distinguisheth, and so must we, between that which is *χάρις τῆ Θεοῦ* the grace of God, and that which is *δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι* the gift by, or of grace.

The grace of God is the love which is in God's own heart, and is the prime cause of our salvation: The gift of grace, is all the grace which is freely given to us, and which flows out from God to us through Jesus Christ.

Every good thing which God gives to us through Christ, hath for its spring the good will which was in the breast of God towards us, from everlasting. The grace of God's favour is the cause of all the gifts of grace which are given to us, and are subjectively in us: The grace of God that moves him to do all for us, and to give all to us, is in himself; and all the grace that is convey'd to us, or that is in us, is the gift of grace. It is call'd grace bestow'd or given, *2 Cor. viii. 2. The grace of God bestow'd on the churches of Macedonia.*

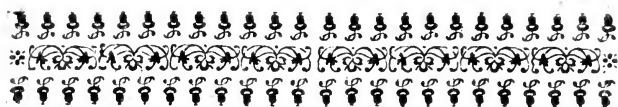
One thing is connected with, and follows upon another in our salvation: But all the
several

several parts of our salvation are the gifts of that grace which was in God from eternity : They are all from it ; they have their dependence on it ; and are the effects of it.

The distinction between the grace by which we are saved which is in God, and the gift of all grace which is our Salvation, must be carefully observed by us, as that which is necessary to prevent many perplexing errors.

When men do not distinguish between the grace that is in God, which is the fundamental cause of our salvation, and the gifts of grace that are in us, they are then led into dangerous mistakes ; and, to the great dishonour of God, set up the gifts of grace, which are inherently in the creature, to be the causes and conditions of salvation ; and so cry up the streams or rivulets, to the disparagement of the original spring that feeds them.

All the several graces which are in believers are the gifts of that grace which is in God ; and altho' they be constituent parts of salvation, yet they are no causes or conditions of it.



C H A P. III.

*The Glory of the Grace of God,
as it is display'd in the Sal-
vation of Sinners.*

I Shall shew how glorious the grace of God is, which is the cause of our salvation. The glory of it shines forth in four things. 1. It is eternal. 2. It is free. 3. It is purchased grace. 4. It is infinite grace.

I. The grace by which we are saved, is eternal. It is eternal both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, it is without beginning, and it is without end, *Psal. ciii. 17. The Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.*

1. It is from everlasting, or without a beginning, *Jer. xxxi. 3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* The cause and reason why God calls a sinner in time,

is the Love which he had for him from eternity: When he draws or converts a sinner, it is because he loved him with an everlasting love. The salvation of sinners must be after their creation, and after their being born into the World, but the grace by which they are saved is eternal.

2. It is unto everlasting. As it has no beginning, so it is without end. *Isa. liv. 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy redeemer.* The paternal anger of God against believers is little, and it is for a moment; but his kindness, which puts the sea of his mercy in motion towards them, is everlasting. The strength of God's eternal love is the security of a believer's happiness: There can be no decays in the kindness of God, because it is unto everlasting; it is a fountain that can never freeze or stagnate in the heart of God. There is a succession in the emanations of grace to them who are the objects of it; but there is no variation of it, because God is of *one mind*, *Job xxiii. 13.* God can no more be diverted from his purpose of grace, than he can come under a change

in his essence. It is the lowest point of vanity in us, to have nothing but mutability in us ; but it is the perfection of God to be without any shadow of turning : God is immutable, and because he is immutable he rests in his love. *Zeph. iii. 17.* *He will rest in his love.* There can be no variation in the love of God, because he rests in it: The grace of God can no more alter, than God can leave off to be immutable. Where the grace of God falls, it abides, and is without variation : when God is gracious to a Man, he will be gracious to him for ever. There are many changes in a believer's frame towards God ; but there is no change in God's gracious disposition towards him. The natural rain-bow has several colours in it ; but the rain-bow about the throne of God, which represents the covenant of grace, is like an emerald. *Rev. iv. 3.* It hath but one colour, which is green ; this signifies the eternity and immutability of the grace of God.

II. The grace by which we are saved is free. It is so free, that we cannot possibly apprehend any thing to be so free as it is.

1. It rises up in the heart of God towards us, without any motive *ab extra*, or out of God himself. It is the fulfilling of the good pleasure of his goodness, 2 *Theff.* i. 11.

A reason may be given, why God hath made many things in the creation as they are. The figure of the heavens is circular or round, because it is fit for motion; the Sun is placed in the center of the world, that it may both enlighten the stars, and nourish the plants; the heart is in the midst of the body, that it may afford heat to all the members.

Again, a reason may be given from the grace of God, for all that which he doth in the salvation of sinners; but the good pleasure of his will is the only reason, why he is gracious to sinners. The grace which is in God, is the motive and cause of every thing which he doth to save us in a way of mercy; but there is nothing out of God which is the motive or cause of his grace. The grace which is in God is moved by nothing, but hath its motion only in and from it self, and is the cause of all that which God doth for us.

If God elect us in Christ, it is because of his grace; if he give Christ to die for us, it is because of his grace; if he confer happiness upon us, when we are not only without merit, but when every thing in the whole frame and constitution of our souls is contrary to the lowest degree of merit, it is because of his grace; if he bear with us, when we are provoking criminals, it is because of his grace; if he glorify his truth in the performance of his promise, it is because of his grace; if he commiserate us in our distress, and relieve us in our indigence, it is because of his grace; if he justify our persons, if he forgive our sins, if he renew and sanctify our natures, if he preserve in us the renewing and sanctifying grace which he hath given, if he strengthen the grace which he hath preserved, and if he perfect the grace which he hath strengthen'd, it is because he is gracious in himself. The grace which is in God, is the cause of all the good which he gives to us, or doth for us; but no other reason can be given why God is gracious to us, but only because he has eternally purposed in himself to be gracious to us.

2. When God pitches on the objects of his grace, he acts freely according to the sovereignty of his will and good pleasure. He is guided in the choice which he makes, only by his sovereign will; he chooses all the objects of his love in Christ, but not for Christ. Christ merits all the grace which is given to elect persons, but he did not merit the grace which elected them, for electing grace hath no cause but its own free motion: The grace which is in God elects whom it will, and singles out its objects sovereignly. The reason that God gives of his discriminating favour, with respect to persons, is the sovereignty of his will. *Exod. xxxiii 19. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.*

3. When the grace of God flows out to persons in the gifts of it, and terminates upon them in time, it then acts most freely.

(1.) God gives grace to sinners, when they are not only without all worth, but when they are most unworthy. The favour of men is drawn out by something of worth, which is either real or supposed in persons who meet with their friendship; but when the grace which is in

God conveys its gifts and effects to sinners, they are so far from having any excellency in themselves, that they have nothing in them but proper motives for hatred: They are not only without all worth, but they are full of the greatest unworthiness, *Ezek. xvi. 6. I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, live.* When God saves us, we are not only worthless, but we are most unworthy: God finds all in us that might provoke him to destroy us, but he finds nothing in us that can be a motive or reason why he should save us: He heals us when we are in our obstinacy and rebellion, *Isa. lvii. 17, 18. He went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* What then? Did God wait for the preparation of a relenting frame in him? I answer, No; *I have seen his ways, and will heal him.* It is as if God had said, I must heal him, because he will make himself worse and worse, 'till I begin to make him better. The damnation of sinners is upon strict desert; but it is from the Grace of God that any sinners are saved: When the souls of men come under the punishing justice of God, it is because of sin: The destruction of sinners is the reward of their sins; but

but the salvation of sinners is the free gift of God. God doth us good, not only when we deserve no good, but when we deserve all evil; and therefore the grace which he gives to us is more free, than the grace which he gives to the elect Angels. The grace of creation, whereof the pure spotless Angels are partakers, is grace given without any worth in them. Whatsoever the Angels have, they received it as a gift from God; he owes nothing to them; but they owe all they have to him. The grace which the Angels receive from God, comes to them when they are without all desert; but God gives all grace to us, when we are not only without desert, but when we are worthy of death. When we are not only chain'd galley-slaves, but in love with our bondage, God sets us free: When we are a composition of weakness and wickedness, of hell and death, of impotency and conceitedness, of inability and perverseness, God then creates in us the dispositions of heaven: When we are in a state of spiritual death, and are full of unlamented disobedience, unregarded obstinacy, and are insensibly benumm'd with a dead palsy, God then

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quicken us, and raises us up to walk in newness of life.

(2.) God gives all spiritual blessings to sinners, without any thing done by them as a condition performed for the obtaining the blessings which he gives. As he gives grace to them when they are without all worth, so he gives all spiritual blessings to them, without any conditions perform'd by them.

This is a truth much contested; and because it meets with great contradiction from men of unsound judgments, I shall endeavour to prove it. I shall prove by three things that God gives all spiritual blessings, without any regard to conditions perform'd by us.

[1.] If any spiritual blessing were given by God because of some condition perform'd, then that which were thus given would be a debt, and not the gift of grace, to him that perform'd the condition: But the gift of grace is opposed to all that which makes any good from God a debt to the creature, *Rom. iv. 4. To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.* The apostle speaks of justification by grace as opposite to justification
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by works : If justification were any ways by or for works, it would be a debt, but not of grace.

[2.] If God did not give all spiritual blessings without conditions perform'd by us, then the way of his dispensing spiritual blessings to us would suit the covenant of works, but not the covenant of grace, because the covenant of grace excludes all meriting conditions on the creatures side. Merit is twofold. 1. It is absolute. 2. It is federal.

1.) Merit is absolute. This is when the good which is done deserves something from the person for whose profit it was done, to the person who did it : Generation merits for parents the love and obedience of their children : Creation merits all adoration for God from rational creatures. There can be no absolute merit in any creature towards God : It is not to be found in the very Angels.

2.) Merit is federal. This is when the work done doth not merit by its own worth, but only by some preceding compact or agreement. The obedience of *Adam* in his innocent state, was only meritorious by compact : *Adam's* merit in his state

state of Innocency was only federal, or conditional merit.

1.] He could not merit any thing of God by the intrinſick worth of his ſervice: He could not profit his maker by his obedience, or procure any favour from him upon the ſcore of ſome ſervice firſt done.

2.] He could do nothing without a power of conſervation from God: He could not move or act without a dependance on God.

3.] He could do nothing but what he was bound to do by the law of creation. Duty when it is done may be federal merit, but it can never be abſolute merit. *Adam's* merit was only federal or conditional: The favour of God was due to him by virtue of God's ſtipulation; upon his performing the conditions of the covenant of works.

If ſpiritual bleſſings did now become due to a ſinner upon his performing any duty as a condition, then two things would follow.

(1. The covenant of grace would be as much a covenant of works, as ever *Adam's* covenant was. When men teach their hearers to believe, that they muſt expect every

every saving benefit from God upon the performance of some condition, they bring them under a covenant of works; and do not more deceive their understandings, than they do destroy their comfort.

(2. God would accept of duties which are full of sinful imperfections, as the federal conditions and terms of life. This would disparage both the infinite wisdom and holiness of God. What a reproach would it be to the infinite wisdom and holiness of God, if he did accept duties as federal conditions or terms of life, which abound with sinful defects?

(3.) No spiritual blessing can be due to us as we are fallen creatures upon the performance of any federal condition; but God gives all to us, without the antecedent condition of any congruity, preparation, or fitness in us. There is nothing that God requires of us sinners as a price of the gifts of his grace: His bread and water, his milk and honey, are the free gift of grace, *Isa. lv. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* God calls us to buy wine and milk
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of him, because we have them as willingly from him, as we have any thing from men which we buy of them for their full price : Buy them we must, because we cannot set a value upon them which is high enough : Buy them without money and price we must, because we receive them more freely from God than we can wish or desire. To offer money, or to think that we can obtain the gifts of God's grace by any thing that we can do, is the most dangerous offer that we can make in this world. When *Simon Magus* offer'd money for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which a man might have, and yet go to hell, the consequence was most hurtful to him, and drew from the apostle *Peter* a sharp reproof, *Acts* viii. 20, 21. *Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.* The gifts of God's grace are sure for ever, and cannot be lost ; and therefore much more precious than the gift of working miracles, which *Simon Magus* would have bought

bought for money. The more precious the gifts of grace are, the more dangerous it is to go about to buy them by our duties. Our prayers and tears, our sorrow and humiliation, our other good works and duties of obedience, shall perish with us, when we offer them to God as a price, or as purchasing money for the gifts of his grace. Good works trusted to, are as mortal, as sins not repented of: The apostle reckoned them to be not only loss, but dung, *Phil. iii. 8. I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and I do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* By all things he meant all duties, all penitential acts, and all his personal righteousness and holiness. He did not neglect duties, or reject personal holiness; for no man was stricter than he; but he would not join them with the righteousness of Christ, or bring them in as contribution money to purchase life and blessedness.

It may be said, that many of the promises of grace which are in the word of God, are laid down in a conditional strain; and a particular Instance may be given of faith, as it is made a condition of salvation,

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Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth shall be saved. Is not believing, a condition of salvation? To this I answer. Faith is no more a condition of salvation, than the reason of a man is the condition of his having understanding or knowledge, when it is said, he that has reason shall understand or know. As reason is not a condition of knowledge, but a part of it, and without which there can be no knowledge; so faith is not a condition of our salvation, but it is a part of our salvation, as it is a grace in us, and it is that without which no adult person can be saved.

III. The grace, by which we are saved, is purchased grace; it is grace purchased by Christ.

First, I shall shew in what sense grace is not purchased by Christ. *Secondly*, I shall shew in what sense it is purchased.

I. I shall shew in what sense grace is not purchased by Christ.

(I.) Christ did not purchase the grace which is in God. He did not die to render God gracious, but he died because God resolved to be gracious, as well as to maintain

tain the honour of his justice: If there had been no grace in God, there would have been no contrivance for our redemption, and no choice of Christ to be a redeemer.

(2.) Christ did not merit the gift of himself. *It was by the grace of God, that Christ tasted death for every man.* viz. for every one that he brings to glory, *Heb. ii. 9.* It was according to justice, and yet it was by the grace of God that Christ tasted death: it was the highest act of justice for God to inflict death on Christ, when he bore our sins, and endured the punishment, which was deserved by them; but it was a pure act of grace for God to give Christ to die for us.

2. I shall shew in what sense grace is purchased by Christ. All the grace which God gives after the gift of Christ, is purchased grace, and is given for Christs sake: It is given freely, and yet it comes to us by purchase: God not only gives all good to us, and forgives all sin freely; but he gives his own son to purchase all the good which he gives, and the remission of all the sins which he forgives.

It may seem a contradiction to say, the gift of grace is free, when yet it is purchased; but it hath not the least appearance of a contradiction in it, when we consider, that the gift of Christ, who lays down the purchasing price of grace is as free, as the grace which is given. The grace which is given is purchased, but it is only purchased by Christ, who was freely given to purchase it for us. The purchase of grace doth not make it less free, but adds to the glory of it, because God was at the cost of his sons blood to purchase it. *John iii. 16: God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son.* The grace that God gives to us is given for nothing, but it was purchased by the blood of his son: He gave Christ to die for us, that he might purchase all the grace which is freely given to us. God's giving Christ to die for us, and receiving his death as the price of our redemption, doth not detract from the freeness of grace, but makes it more glorious: The purchase of grace doth not derogate from the freeness of it, because it was purchased only by the price which Christ gave for it, but the purchase

chafe of it accumulates a greater glory on it.

(1.) The gift of grace as it is purchased is more glorious than the grace which is given to the angels; because there is no small inequality between grace which is only given, and grace which is both given and purchased. The grace which we receive from God is not only a gift, but it is a purchased gift. Grace, as it is purchased, is as a river, that not only runs out of the heart of God, but thro' the channel of Christ's blood; and therefore there is a greater glory in it than there is in the grace of the angels: God not only gives grace and glory to us, as he doth to the angels, but he is at the charge of purchasing grace and glory for us, at the highest rate, and by that which is dearest to himself, even the blood of his son. All good comes to us from the grace of God, and God will have all grace to come to us through the death of his son.

(2) The grace that is given to us, as it is purchased grace, brings a greater and higher assurance of eternal life and peace to believers, than either innocent *Adam* would have had, if he had been carry'd to heaven, or

the angels now have, who are confirmed in grace. If innocent *Adam* had been translated to heaven, his happiness would have been the effect of God's creating goodness; the good will of God simply considered, would have been the foundation of his happiness, and it is on this, that the felicity of the angels stands. The good angels are chosen in Christ, and are under him as their confirming head; but they have all only from the creating grace or goodness of God: The goodness of God to them is a foundation of happiness and peace that will never fail, but it is not so strong as the happiness and peace of believers, which is not only the love of God's heart, but the price of Christ's blood, and the imputation of his righteousness. Believers stand not only by electing grace, but also by redeeming grace, and they stand in the righteousness of Christ: This makes their Title to heaven firmer, and the foundation of their happiness stronger, than the title and foundation of the angels. The angels, because of their confirmation under Christ, as a head of which they have a clear knowledge, cannot fear falling; but the foundation of their standing is not so strong as that of believers, who

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often in this life, through the weakness of their faith, fear falling and perishing. The angels are said to cover their faces when they stand before God, *Isa. 6. 2.* Why do they cover their faces? I answer, Not only because of their reverence towards God, but also because they stand before God in a righteousness, which altho' it be unstain'd yet it is no more than the righteousness of creatures: This raises in them a sort of sinful shame, when they compare themselves with the infinite holiness of God. The righteousness of the angels is only the righteousness of creatures, which is not stable and immutable in it self, and therefore they cover their faces before God, because their angelical perfection is but imperfection, in comparison of his righteousness. The angels have not the least sinful spot or blemish in them, and as their righteousness is a full conformity to the law of creation, they have the assurance of happiness and peace; but their righteousness is only the righteousness of mere creatures, and cannot give them such confidence before the throne of God, as glorified believers will for ever have; because glorified believers stand before God in the righteousness of Christ, which is the righte-

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ousness of one, who was God as well as man ; and is a righteousness that not only answers all the demands and requiries of the law of creation, but is commensurate to the infinite purity and holiness of God.

IV. The grace by which we are saved is infinite : It is infinitely rich. God has riches of grace, *Eph. i. 7.* God has not only riches of grace, but exceeding riches of grace, *Eph. ii. 7.* *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus.* The great end that God has in the salvation of sinners, is to shew forth in the endless ages to come, the glory of his grace in the exceeding riches of it. The grace of God is so rich, that eternity itself can only serve to shew forth the riches of it. The grace of God, because it is infinitely rich, is a full overflowing and everflowing fountain : It is a sea without surface or bottom, without bank or shore.

I. There is a superabundance in grace with respect to all our sins, *Rom. v. 20.* *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* Where sin abounded to damn, grace did much more abound to save. The mercy which God hath for sinners, as it is his

own mercy, so it is abundant mercy, 1 Pet. i. 3. *According to his abundant mercy, he has begotten us again to a lively hope.* Κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος. *According to his own abundant mercy.* It is much mercy, without parsimony: It is abundant mercy, without penury.

2. The grace of God is without measure. God has made all things belonging to the creation in number, weight and measure. The earth and sea are great, but God weighs them in a ballance: The heavens are larger than the earth, but they have their bounds and limits: The number of the stars surmounts our capacity, but God calls them all by their names. All the works of God are in measure, but his grace is without measure.

We may still conceive something more, and beyond what God hath displayed as to the extensiveness of his perfections. He hath made one world, but he might have made many, he might have made every star like the sun; and whereas the species of animal creatures are said to be one hundred and fifty, he might have made them as many thousands and millions: But in our salvation by Christ, God hath shew-

ed all that which his grace can do for us. God could not express higher love than he has manifested, in giving Christ to die for us; and he could not give a greater gift than the gift of Christ.

(1.) God could not express higher love than he has manifested, in giving Christ to die for us, *Rom. v. 8. God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* God commended his love, or made it illustrious, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: God not only gave Christ when he was under no obligation to give him, but he gave him to die for us when we were sinners. When we had nothing to move God to be gracious to us; when we could not perform either acceptable or tolerable service for God; when we were children of wrath, open enemies, and treacherous rebels, that provoked God to destroy us, then was God moved by his own grace to give Christ to die for us.

(2.) God could not give a greater and richer gift than the gift of Christ. It is a gift so great, that it is without a parallel: It is great, beyond all things that can be given; and because it is so, the
apostle

apostle teaches believers to argue from the gift of Christ, to assure themselves of the gift of all other things, *Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* God the Father was infinitely sensible what it was to give his Son, who was of the same substance with himself; and he neither spared to give him, nor to punish him for us when he was given: He spared not his own Son, but delivered him for us to the stroke of justice. When God delivered up Christ to be punished for our Sins, the glory of his grace and the glory of his justice did then shine forth together: It was grace in the glory of it that gave Christ to die for us; and it was a glorious appearance of the justice of God not to spare to punish him when he was given for us: It was glorious grace that gave Christ for us; and it was justice in the glory of it, that wounded him for our transgressions, and bruised him for our iniquities. The gift of Christ to die for us, was a gift of such rich and glorious grace, that none know how to take the estimate of it

but God, who was the giver, and Christ, who was the gift.

God has acted grace to the utmost in the gift of Christ, and in our salvation through him. For Christ to come down from heaven to partake of the human nature, that he might bring us to partake not only of a new nature, but of the divine glory, is a thing so great, that it is not possible for men or angels to have thoughts or conceptions of any thing that is greater. As there is infinitely more merit in Christ to save us, than there is evil in sin to bring eternal death on us; so Christ is infinitely more valuable than salvation itself, or all the souls that are saved by him : He is worth more than all the riches and treasures of heaven. The Saints in glory wonder at the work of their redemption ; and they have reason to wonder most, because they are redeemed by the price of Christ's blood.

If the grace of God by which we are saved be eternal, and without the least variation ; if it be most free, if it be purchased by the highest price, and if it be infinitely rich, then we ought to say, How glorious is the grace of God ! When we
consider

consider the grace of God in its aforesaid excellencies, we must acknowledge that the glory of it doth infinitely surpass all the thoughts which we can have of it in our present state of frailty: It is so glorious, that it is far above the reach of our most ascending thoughts, and it is too large for the narrow vessel of our faith: The more it is above our apprehension, the more it must be the object of our admiration: When it is astonishing and amazing to our view, we must long for a sight of the glory of it in the light of heaven, which can only set it before us in all the perfection of its beauty.





C H A P. IV.

Reasons given why the salvation of sinners is only by grace.

I Shall shew why the salvation of sinners is only by grace.

I. The salvation of sinners is only by grace, that boasting may be excluded.

II. The salvation of sinners is only by grace, because salvation cannot be by works.

I. The salvation of sinners is only by grace, that boasting may be excluded. *God will have no flesh to glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29.* The salvation of sinners is by grace, and not by works, that no flesh may glory before God, and that all boasting may be excluded, *Rom. iii. 27. Where is boasting then?*

then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. By the law of faith, we must understand the doctrine of the gospel, which is a doctrine of grace. The way in which God brings sinners to glory, cuts them off from glorying in themselves, because they are saved by grace, and not by works. It is by grace that boasting is excluded: But boasting could never be excluded, if the salvation of sinners were by works, and not by grace only.

1. The pride of man's depraved nature is so great, that he is strongly addicted to boasting.

2. Man, as he is in a lapsed state, would have a foundation laid for boasting, if works were any causes or conditions of his salvation.

1. The pride of man's depraved nature is so great, that he is strongly addicted to boasting. Every natural man is ready to boast, and to say with the church of *Lao-dicea*, that he is rich, increased with goods, and hath need of nothing; when he is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, *Rev.* iii. 17. When he is poor, he is proud; when he is indigent, he is vain-glorious; when he is despicable and worthless, he is

a great self-admirer ; when he is low in condition, he is lofty in opinion ; when he is impotent, he is insolent, and would buy the things which he must beg. He is not only a boaster, but he boasts against God, on whom he necessarily depends for all that he hath ; he would have happiness, but he would thank none for it but himself : When he receives benefits that he can never requite, he denies the kindness of the giver, and disowns his obligation to acknowledge the benefits which are freely given : When he receives all from God, he would return something as a price for what God gives. It is the great pride of man's heart, that he scorns to thrive, and be made rich by gift ; and therefore he would have salvation as a reward for his work.

2. Man, as he is in a lapsed state, would have a foundation laid for boasting, if works were any causes or conditions of his salvation. It is natural for men not only to love, but to over-love their own works ; and it is their universal distemper to be prone, and to boast of what they have done. When it is natural to sinners to over-value their own works, and to boast of them, a foundation would be unavoidably laid for their boasting,

boasting, if the performance of any thing as a condition made the favour of God due to them. If a man could now perform or do any thing, altho' by the strength of inherent grace, upon which he might claim something from God, then that which did come to him upon this account, would be payment, and not a free gift; and he would boast of it, or glory in himself: He would boast that he had got a reward by his industry, and that he had made himself to differ from many others. There was great reason for what the apostle says, *Eph. ii. 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Salvation is not of works which are done either before conversion, or after conversion, that no man may have a temptation to boast. God hath ordained that believers should walk in good works, but not that they should be saved by, or for their works, lest they should boast of them. If salvation were by works, fallen man would then have a foundation laid for his boasting; but because God will for ever silence all boasting in the creature, therefore the salvation of sinners is only by grace.

God has excluded all boasting from the way of our salvation, because boasting is a sin

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sin that makes men like the devil in pride, and it rifles God of the glory of his grace, because it places sinners upon God's throne, when it is their duty to lick the dust of his footstool. If God hath excluded boasting from the way of our salvation, then let us give it no room in our hearts and lives. Boasting is a sin where it reigns, that brings destruction on the souls of sinners; and when it is found in believers, it is destructive to their comfort: When believers are swell'd up with self-applauding thoughts, they are then near sinking into a flood of sorrow, under the darkness of desertion: When they draw a veil over the glory of God's grace, by letting a spirit of boasting lodge with them, God will then cloud the light of their comfort.

II. The salvation of sinners is only by grace, because it cannot be by works. If our salvation were not by grace, there could then be no salvation for us; because by our works we can neither satisfy for our sins, nor do what the law demands for our justification before God.

1. It is impossible for us by our works to satisfy the offended justice of God for the sins which we have committed.

(1.) All that which we now do in a way of obedience, is defective and defiled; and because of the defects and defilements which are in our obedience, it cannot satisfy the justice of God. That which is sinful in itself can never satisfy for sin. The imperfections of our duties add to our sins.

(2.) Whatsoever we do is a debt antecedently to our doing it. It is owing to God by the Law of creation before we do it; and because it is a debt, it cannot satisfy for sin. We are bound to obey the law in its perfection; and if we could perfectly obey the law as we are bound, we should have nothing to spare to satisfy for our sins. It is as absurd to say, that obedience to the law can satisfy for our sins, as it is to think that the payment of one bond can be a legal discharge for another. Our debt of obedience, if it were fully paid by us as we are creatures, could not discharge our debt of sufferings as we are sinners. If our present works were perfect, they could not satisfy for our former sins, because we cannot pay the old debt of sin by our duties, which would have been due to God if we had never sinned: We cannot

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not satisfy for our sins by answering (if it were in our power) the obligation which lies on us as we are creatures.

2. We cannot do that which the law demands for our justification before God, which is perfect obedience. Our obedience is imperfect, and we cannot be justified by that which is imperfect. God justifies them who are not only imperfect, but ungodly; but he justifies none because of their imperfect obedience. When we have done our best, we may be ashamed of what we have done: Our obedience, because it is imperfect, brings us under the censure, but not the justifying sentence of the law of God: In many things we offend all; and in our purest service we offend much. This is a truth to which we must subscribe, if we know any thing either of our own hearts, or of God's word.

If any say they can now obey the law of God without sinful imperfections, they are self-deceivers, *1 John i. 8. If we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.* Every man's face will blush that sees his heart and life in the glass of the law, because he then beholds the greatest deformity in himself.

We

We cannot be saved by our own works, because by our works we can neither satisfy for our sins, nor do what the law commands, which is perfect obedience: It was Christ only who was freely given of God for us, that could satisfy for our sins, and obey the law in the perfection of its commands; he endured the penalty of the law and so satisfied for our sins, and he obeyed all the precepts of the law and so merited the reward of eternal life for us.

As we are not able either to satisfy for our sins, or to obey the law in its perfection, there can be no salvation by our works, but if grace did not interpose, there would be condemnation to us for our evil deeds. It is by grace and by grace only, that we can be saved, and therefore we should be as much in blessing God for the way of our salvation, which is by grace, as for salvation it self: When we bless God for our salvation, let us then also bless him for saving us by grace, because if we were not saved by grace, there could then be nothing for us but inevitable damnation.



C H A P. V.

The salvation of sinners proved to be only from the grace of God.

I Shall prove, that our salvation, in the entire system and in the whole contexture of it, is only from the grace of God.

There are three things which may prove the salvation of sinners to be by grace.

I. The deliverance of Israel from *Egypt*, which was a figure or mystical representation of the salvation of sinners by grace.

II. The covenant of grace, which makes provision for our salvation.

III. The consideration of the distinct degrees of our salvation.

I. The deliverance of *Israel* from *Egypt*, as it was a figure, or mystical representati-

on of our salvation, proves the salvation of sinners to be only by grace. Our salvation by grace was mystically represented by God's dealings with *Israel*, when he brought them out of *Egypt*, and carried them into *Canaan*. If we look back to the conduct of God with respect to the people of *Israel*, when they were delivered from the *Egyptian* bondage, we may then see how all the success which attended them, was not from their own wisdom and valour, but from divine favour.

Was *Pharaoh* forced to give them leave to depart? It was not any victory which they obtain'd over that cruel tyrant that compelled him to let them go; but it was the great God who fought their battels, and sent forth his Angel, arm'd with a revenging sword, to slay all the first born of *Egypt*, and so procured their liberty. Did they pass through the red sea without loss or detriment? It was not by fitting out a fleet and preparing a naval force, but God divided the gulph, and afforded them a commodious passage. Were they fed in the wilderness? It was not because they till'd the ground; but because God made a miraculous dew or rain

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of manna to fall every morning before the doors of their tents. Were they cured and healed of the mortal bitings of poisonous serpents? It was not by the application of medicinal remedies; but by the sight of the brazen serpent; which, according to its own proper and natural operation, did tend to inflame their wounds, and not to heal them. Did they go over *Jordan* with the greatest safety, at such a time when that river overflow'd its banks? It was not by the help of a bridge; but because God rebuked the swelling flood, and forced the furious stream backwards. Did they become masters of *Jerico*? It was not by laying a formal siege to it, or by raising batteries and casting up trenches against it; but because God caused the walls of that insolent city to fall flat to the ground, at the sound of trumpets made of rams horns.

All this did shew that their deliverance was only from the goodness of God, and as it was only from the goodness of God, it was a significant resemblance or shadow of our salvation by grace. God by the temporal deliverance which he wrought out for *Israel*,
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as it is recorded in his word, seeks to elevate our thoughts to a considerable mystery, which is this; Our salvation is neither obtain'd by our own strength, nor depends on our own works, nor is merited by our own labours; but is only from the grace of God, and is the effect of his mercy and royal bounty.

II. It may be proved from the covenant of grace, which makes provision for the salvation of sinners, that it is only by grace that we are saved. The covenant of grace by which we are saved, is a covenant of promise. *Ephes. ii. 12. Strangers to the covenants of promise.* By the covenants of promise we must understand not many covenants of promise, but one covenant which is call'd covenants in the plural, because it was of ten declared, repeated and explain'd. The covenant of grace is call'd a covenant of promise, because in the covenant of grace God promises to give all grace to us, without requiring any conditions to be performed by us, before we receive the grace which he hath promised. There is order in the covenant of grace, and because it is well ordered in all things, one thing is given after another; but it hath no conditions.

God doth not in the covenant command any one thing to be done by us, to give us a right to the grace which is promised. The gifts or grants of the covenant of grace do not depend on any thing which is in us or done by us, because the covenant of grace is built on the immutable purpose of God, and hath its confirmation in the death of Christ the Testator : All grace is promised to us as a free gift in the covenant, without the requiring any conditions to be first performed by us, to entitle us to what is given. That this is a truth, may be proved by three things.

1. The covenant of grace is compared to the covenant of day and night, and to Noah's covenant ; both which covenants were without conditions.

(1.) The covenant of day and night, in the regular succession of the one to the other, was without conditions, *Gen. viii. 22. Day and night shall not cease.* To this the covenant of grace is liken'd, *Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26. Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth ; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant.*

2. Noah's

(2.) *Noah's* covenant was without conditions on the creatures part, *Gen.* ix. 10, 11. In *Noah's* covenant God laid men under no restipulations to perform conditions, to give them a right to what was promised. The covenant of grace is compared to *Noah's* covenant, because it is absolute and perpetual, *Isa.* liv. 9. *This is as the waters of Noah to me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.*

2. God promises to receive finners into his favour, and to save them without any conditions, *Hof.* ii. 20. *I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* God doth not say, If thou wilt repent I will receive thee to favour, but he speaks absolutely, *I will betroth thee.* We do not believe and repent before God is our God, but we believe and repent because God is our God, and receives us into his favour : The reason why we give up ourselves to God to be his people, is because he hath given himself to us to be our God, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

3. God, according to the promise of his covenant, gives us grace, that we may act

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vitally when we are spiritually dead, and have no ability to act for God, or to perform any covenant conditions. When our hearts are hearts of stone, God gives us hearts of flesh. *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* The performance of the promise of the covenant, is that which quickens us and raises us up from death to life. Our works are not the causes and conditions of the gift of grace, but the grace which God gives to us is the cause and condition of our good works: Faith, repentance, and all acts of obedience, are not conditions of the covenant of grace; but they come to us by the accomplishment of the covenant promises: They are not the conditions of the covenant but they are the execution of it, and when they are found in us, they prove us to be in the covenant.

If no other provision had been made for us as we are sinners, but a covenant with commandments, or a covenant promising nothing, but upon conditions to be first performed by us, we might then have had despair without hope; but when we have a covenant with promises, or a covenant wherein the free gift of all grace is promised absolutely

folutely to us, it is our sin to despond, and it is our duty to believe in God through Jesus Christ, for the gift of all grace.

III The consideration of the distinct degrees of our salvation, will prove that it is by grace, and only by grace that sinners are saved.

Eternal life is one gift, but it comes to us in several degrees, and not all at once in its utmost perfection. The degrees of our salvation are four, 1. Election. 2. Vocation. 3. Justification. 4. Glorification. We have them all mentioned in one place of Scripture. Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Some who have a greater care to ascribe to the sinful creature what is not its due, than to give to God what is his right, think they have ground from hence to say; that regeneration or the new life of holiness is before justification, or that a sinner is sanctified before he is justified, because vocation is put before justification.

The weakness of this assertion may be seen in two things.

1. By the same rule of interpreting Scriptures

Scriptures, they may as well say, that Gods prescience is before his decree of predestination; because in the verse just before, Gods foreknowledge is put before predestination. *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son.* It was not by two acts, but by one act that God did foreknow and predestinate.

2. When the distinct degrees of our salvation are here reckoned up, it is not the intention of the holy Ghost to ascribe any priority of order to vocation in respect of justification; but to inform us, that all that which falls in between election and glorification is only of Grace, and not from our selves. We are justified and called at the same time; but in order of nature our justification is before our sanctification; because the charge of the law against us, as we are sinners, must be removed before any special work of grace can be wrought in us.

The degrees of our salvation, as has been said, are four, and if we consider them separately and apart, we shall find that the whole fabrick of our salvation from top to bottom, and from the beginning to the end of it, is only from the Grace of God.

1. The Election of persons to glory is of grace: They who are elected to glory are not chosen, because of their foreseen faith or good works; but they are chosen by a sovereign act of God's grace. God could foresee no good in the creature, but only what he himself resolved freely to give: he made choice of no man, because he foresaw he would be good; but he made choice of them whom he has chosen, because it was his will to choose them, and when he made choice of them, he then purposed to make them righteous and holy. *Eph. i. 4, 5. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

We may here observe four things.

(1.) We are not chosen for holiness but unto holiness. Holiness is one end of our election, and it is a consequent fruit of it; but it is no moving or meritorious cause of it: We are elected that we may be holy, but we were not elected, because God foresaw that we would be holy.

(2.) All that are chosen of God are chosen in Christ. Christ was the first fruit of election

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tion ; he was chosen to be the head of the elect, or to be a common person, to represent them before time, and to assume their nature, to act for them as their mediator in time : by one act of electing grace, Christ was chosen as the head of the elect, and they were chosen in him : Christ was chosen, to be the head of all them whom God saves, and they were chosen to be the members of his mystical body, and to be saved by him : Christ was set up as their head from eternity. *Prov. viii. 23. 31. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was ; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.* How was Christ set up from everlasting ? I answer, he was not set up to be the Son of God from everlasting, because he was the Son of God by his eternal generation ; but he was set up from everlasting to be the head of the elect, and to do the work of a mediator. It was from the nature of God that Christ was a Son, but it was from the will of God that he was chosen to be the head of the elect, and appointed to be their mediator : he was the Son of God from eternity by generation, but he was the head of the elect, and ordain'd to be their redeemer
by

by God's choice. As he was set up to be the head of the elect, a covenant was made with him for all the elect: He did not purchase the covenant, because the covenant came from the grace which is in God; but the covenant was made with him as the head of the elect, and he purchased all the grace which is given in the covenant.

(3.) They whom God chooseth are chosen in Christ, but they are not chosen for him. God gave Christ to merit all the grace which he gives to the elect; but Christ was not the cause that moved God to choose them: He could not be the cause of their election, because he was elected himself as God-man, to be their mediator: He himself was chosen as well as they: He was pre-ordained to the office of a mediator *before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 20.

(4.) The election of persons to glory is attributed to the sovereign act of God's grace: They are chosen *according to the good pleasure of his will*. Excellent words, which speak forth admirable, stupendous, and matchless love! It is in Christ that we are chosen; but what made God choose us in him? And what was the cause of his predestinating us to the adoption of children? I answer,

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swer, It was his own grace, or the good pleasure of his will. The good pleasure of God's will is the primary, original, and only cause of our election in Christ. God did not seek in us the cause of our election; but the cause of it was only in himself, and did flow from the free motion of his grace.

Our election in Christ is God's first act to save us, and it is all of grace. As it is the act of God's unchangeable will, it is not conditional, but absolute; and because it is not conditional, but absolute, it is a sure foundation, *2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God stands sure.* When all other foundations must sink and will fail, the foundation of election will stand sure.

2. Vocation is all of grace. Under vocation may be comprehended the whole work of God in us, from the first moment of our entrance into a state of grace till we come to glory. If God convince us of sin, and reclaim us from our folly; if he illuminate our minds, and turn us to himself; if he awaken our consciences, and purge us from dead works; if he soften our hearts, and purifie our affections; if he implant faith in our souls, and kindle in our breasts a fervent flaming charity; if he
create

create in us a permanent hatred of all sin, and a vehement desire after holiness; if he call us to the fellowship of his Son, and make us members of his mystical body; if he confirm us in the believing expectation of eternal life, and every way fit us for the enjoyment of it; in doing all this for us, he magnifies his grace towards us.

When we are call'd of God, it is according to his purpose and grace that we are call'd. 2 Tim i. 9. *Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* What words can be more clear, express and evident? What man will not be convinced by a proof so full? Who will not own all to be of grace, when he reads the Apostles words, unless he be wilfully blind and wedded to his error? it is not said, *we are saved and called according to our works*, but it is said *we are called and saved according to his own purpose and grace.* The purpose of God according to which we are called is not taken up in time, but runs as high as eternity it self: as we are called according to God's eternal purpose, so we are called according to his grace, which is said *to be given us*

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in Christ Jesus, before the world began. It was promised to Christ and given to him for us, by a covenant agreement before the world began. It was of grace that God purposed to call us, and it is of grace when he doth call us: If we have been called by the grace of God, we must then say in the words of the church. *Isa. xxvi. 12. Thou hast wrought all our works in us, or for us.*

Where were we when God called us to himself, and secretly inclined our souls to seek him? I answer, we were not only standing with our faces towards hell; but with a precipitate motion running towards it: What were we doing, when God touch'd and warm'd our hearts with a coal fetch'd from his altar? I answer, we were sleeping in sin without any sense of our danger: What manner of persons were we, when God quickned us? I answer: we were fighters against heaven, and destroyers of our own souls.

All the several influences of God's grace upon us, and all the operations of it in us, are equally free. God is always beforehand with us: He prevents us with his grace, not only in all the good which we receive, but in all the good which we do.

3. Justification is all of grace. The justification of sinners is, when they are accepted and declared righteous by God as a judge, and are not only delivered from hell, but have a title and right given them to the glory of heaven.

This is justification, and it is not by our works, but only by grace that we can be justified.

(1.) It is not by our own works that we can be justified; because in the justification of a sinner, God stands upon a perfect righteousness, which answers all the requiries of the law, and he can accept of nothing less than such a righteousness, as he is a God who judges according to truth. If God accepted of sincere obedience instead of a perfect righteousness, in the justification of a sinner, he would then justify him without any righteousness at all; because that righteousness which is not a full conformity to the law is no righteousness in the judgment of God as he is a righteous lawgiver. God calls for a full and proper satisfaction for sin, and for a perfect obedience to the law in the justification of a sinner, that when he justifies a sinner, he may vindicate and not wrong his own law.

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This perfect righteousness which God calls for in our justification, is not in us, but only in Christ.

[1.] It is not in us; because, in our best duties, we are guilty either of the commission of some evil, or of the omission of that which good. When we stand before a just and holy God, we cannot rely on that which we our selves have done, or can do. Can we alledge the purity of our words, when we are of unclean lips? can we plead the sanctity of our thoughts, when we are uncircumcised in heart? can we trust to our own integrity, when we do not the good which we should, but the evil which we should not? can we promise our selves any thing from our own good meanings and intentions, when we break our resolutions as soon as we make them? can we confide in our own works of righteousness, when they are not only as rags that cannot skreen or cover us from the fire of Gods wrath, but filthy rags to defile us, and to cause the anger of God to flame out more violently against us?

[2.] It is only in Christ that there is a perfect righteousness to justify us; because
cause

cause he fulfilled the law of God for us. No other righteousness but the righteousness of Christ, can justify us before God: The righteousness of Christ only has worth and excellency in it, when it is laid in the ballance of the sanctuary, to weigh down all our sins, and to make the scale fall to our favour on the side of life and salvation.

(2.) It is only by grace that we are justified. Our justification as it was by a perfect righteousness, is according to the strictness of infinite justice, and yet it is all of grace to us: When God glorifies his justice, he also exalts his grace and mercy in our justification. The righteousness of Christ by which we are justified, is all of grace to us: It is of grace that it was provided for us, and promised to us; it is of grace that it is given and applied to us. As it was infinite grace in Christ, to work out righteousness for us, by his obedience to the law; so it was infinite grace in God to lay our sins on Christ, and to accept of a righteousness from him for our justification. We are not justified without a full vindication of God's justice, in the punishment of our sins as they were charged upon Christ, and yet grace rides in tri-

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umph in our justification. *Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* Here are words dropping sweetness to convinced sinners

[1.] It is by free grace that we are justified, because grace gives a justifying righteousness freely to us.

[2.] It is through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ that we are justified, because Christ has purchased the grace of justification for us: our justification is from the purchase of Christ, and yet it is of free grace to us.

4. Glorification which is the last degree of our salvation is all of grace. As the first draught, so the last line of our Salvation is all of grace. Not only the foundation but the top stone of our salvation is of Grace. As it was in the building of the second temple, so it will be when our Salvation is perfected in glory. *Zech. iv. 7. He shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.* When the second temple was built, the Jews by crying *Grace, Grace,* when the head stone was laid on, did declare, that what was then finished was not from their own strength, but from God's goodness towards them. It was
God

God that thaw'd and mollified the hard hearts of heathen princes towards the Jews in their captivity, that they might let them return to their own land: It was he that restrained their enemies, raised them up instruments for their assistance, and gave them opportunity to rebuild the temple. When the top-stone was laid on, the Jews celebrated the praises of God's grace; with loud and joyful acclamations, and did publicly and solemnly acknowledge the favour of God towards them in the building of the second temple. As the top-stone as well as the foundation of the second temple was of grace; so not only the beginning and progress of our salvation is of grace, but when the top-stone of it comes to be laid on in glory, it will be of grace. When our salvation is compared to a building, Christ is said to be not only the corner-stone, but the chief corner-stone of the building. *Eph. ii. 20. And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being himself the chief corner-stone.*

(1.) Christ is the corner-stone of the building of our salvation, to render it sure strong and firm. It is the corner-stone that

binds the several parts of the building, and fastens the contiguous walls together.

(2.) Christ is the chief corner-stone, in the building of our salvation. As he is a corner-stone laid in with the foundation, so he is the chief corner-stone; because he is a corner stone upon the foundation in the continued rising of the building, till it be brought to the very top. As the corner-stone has its special use, in every part of the corner of the building, from the foundation to the roof; so it is placed in the highest part of the building and becomes the top-stone. Christ as a corner stone runs through the whole building of our salvation, and when the building is perfected in heaven, Christ will be brought forth as the chief corner-stone or the top-stone of it, and all the heavenly inhabitants will cry out, *Grace, Grace.*

It is in heaven that the grace of God will be seen, in all its bright rays and sparkling beams: It is there that all the designs of God from eternity, and all his works in time, to make his people happy, will appear in their beauty, and will, as so many distinct lines drawn from the circumference, point to grace as their only center.

Every

Every thing in our salvation, from the foundation of it in election to the topstone of it glory, is of grace: Grace not onely formed the whole contrivance of our salvation without us, but Grace begins every good work in us: Grace maintains what it begins, and grace perfects what it maintains. There is nothing in us but misery, when God begins his work in us, and there is nothing in us but inability when he brings the work which he hath begun in us to perfection. It is grace that put us into the way of life, keep us in it, and sets the crown of glory on our heads.

In the account which has been given of our salvation, it may be observed how the grace of God shines in the several and distinct degrees of it.

Election is the root; vocation and justification are branches from this root that bear fruit; and glorification is the harvest, when the ripe fruit will be gathered into the barn. Election is the spring of our happiness; vocation and justification are streams which come from this spring; and glorification is the ocean into which the streams run and discharge themselves. Election is the foundation of

our blessedness; vocation and justification are not only the structure which is raised upon this foundation, but the porch or entrance into the most holy place; and glorification is the excellent and admirable sanctuary, where God will for ever shine forth in the transcendent brightness of his glory.



CH A P. IV.

The application of the doctrinal truth.

I Shall apply the truth in three things.

I. If the salvation of sinners be by grace and only by grace, then we must neither corrupt, nor abuse the doctrine of grace.

i. We

1. We must not corrupt the doctrine of grace, by mixing works with grace. All men are naturally unwilling to come to duties, but when they have performed them, altho' but superficially, they are then as apt to rest in their duties as they were before unwilling to come to them, and so mingle something of their own with the grace of God. This error is so great that no reproof can be too sharp for it.

(1.) To mix works with grace is either the fruit of gross ignorance, or it is accompanied with great hypocrisy.

[1] It is the fruit of gross ignorance both of God and of our selves. When we know either how weak and sinful we our selves are, or how holy God is, we shall not then make our works to bear any part with the grace of God in our salvation. When men go about to establish their own righteousness and do not trust to the righteousness of Christ alone, for justification, it is because *they are ignorant of the righteousness of God. Rom. x. 3.*

[2.] It is accompanied with great hypocrisy. They who plead most for works as causes and conditions of their salvation, are self condemned, because they are

no true friends but real enemies to good works. *Plutarch* reports of *Demosthenes*, that he loved to praise the virtues of his predecessors, but not to imitate them. We are forced to say of all meritmongers, that when they most largely commend good works, they most shamefully neglect them. The opposers of grace do ever give us reason to complain, that they do not seem ready, *verba vertere in opera*: When we hear their good words: we see not their good works: They pull down in their practice, what they build up in their profession: When they profess to believe, the causality and conditionality of works in the justification of their persons before God, why are they not great workers? why are they so remiss to work out a righteousness of their own, when they speak so big and loud of wearing it? why do they live such unwary lives, as to deserve the character of the Scribes and Pharisees their ancient forerunners? *Math. xxiii. 3. They say and do not.*

(2.) To mix works with grace, takes from God the glory of his grace, which is the greatest glory that comes to him from all his works.

The redemption of sinners as it is God's greatest and last work, so it out-shines all his other works. The second creation which is the salvation of sinners by grace, is far more excellent than the first creation; and all that which God did about the first creation was only preliminary and preparatory to the second. If the glory which comes to God by the salvation of sinners be so great, he will not spare but punish them who assume to themselves a share in his glory, and so offer the highest indignity to him. We must perform duties, but we must not trust in them, lest we darken the glory of the grace of God. It was the saying of Cardinal *Pool*, and it is worthy to be minded by us, because it is so seldom that we have a witness for the truth in the *Roman Conclave*. Too much (saith he) can neither be detracted from mans strength, nor given to God's grace. * As we can never go too low in depressing and casting down the pretended power and worth of fallen man, so we cannot run too high in exalting the grace of God.

* *Non potest viribus humanis nimium detrahi, nec addi divine gratie. Hadden contra Oserium. Lib. 2. Fl. 58.*

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(3.) To mix works with grace brings destruction on sinners. If we mix our own works with grace, we shall not then be saved by grace, but be condemned for our evil works. When the *Papists* and some who would be reckoned *Protestants*, go about to persuade men that they are their own saviours, they then defraud them of the true redeemer, and of salvation by him. To join works with grace as if they were causes of salvation, is a rock upon which deceived sinners break and split eternally; and therefore we can never be too careful to shun it.

2. We must not abuse the doctrine of grace. As carnal reason puts us upon mingling something of our own with the grace of God, so self love turns it into wantonness. The mystery of grace makes a carnal fancy to reel and stagger. *Rom. viii. 32. What shall we say to these things?* The apostle had in the verse before spoken of the great points of predestination, vocation, justification and glorification, which are all from and by the grace of God; when he thought of what he had said, he cries out, *what shall we say to these things?* Few men can bear the handling

ling of the doctrine of grace, but turn it a wrong way and draw wanton, vile pernicious consequences from it: If salvation (say they) be altogether of grace, then we need do nothing and may live as we list. If any of us reason at this wild rate, our drossy impure hearts were never acquainted with the blessed doctrine of grace, and we have no part or portion in it.

When professors make the doctrine of grace a plea for licentiousness, they do three things.

(1.) They disparage the doctrine of grace which they profess to believe. It cannot but offend such as promote a catholick design of glorifying God in the world, to hear dissolute persons plead for this truth, when they openly disgrace it by their loose lives: The orthodoxy of such men doth the devil's work effectually, because the most expeditious and prevailing way for the devil to cast reproach on this great truth, is to get some notorious and scandalous sinners to be zealous contenders for it. Let us do what we can, the inadvertent multitude will look more at what we do and what our actions are, than at what we believe, and what our principles are

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are; when our lives are bad, they can never then think that the doctrines which we believe can be good. Ignorant injudicious persons are ready to receive the most heretical opinions, when the patrons and promoters of them gloss them over with a dissembled strictness and a seeming sanctity, because the populace judges of things by their outward appearance, and not by their real worth; but the most fundamental, weighty, necessary, and excellent doctrines find very cold entertainment with common people, when the professors of them do not spread abroad a good report of them by a serious, holy, mortified conversation.

(2.) They act contrary to the good Spirit of God as he is a Spirit of truth and holiness. *Paul's* supposition which he condemns as absurd and impious, is their position which they approve and commend. *Rom. vi. 1. 2. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.* What the apostle started from, they embrace: What he branded with a *God forbid* they welcome and receive with applause: They sin on design, as if their wickedness
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could be a foil to set of the grace of God with a greater brightness.

(3.) They will come under the severest condemnation. The doctrine of grace is a soft downy doctrine for weary souls to rest upon, but not to tickle silken ears; it is a gentle breath to fan a scorched soul and to give it sweet refreshment, but not to blow upon men in their presumptuous sinning against God; it is a flowery truth to revive distressed fainting sinners; but to draw venomous, malignant inferences from it to encourage our selves in sin will bring upon us judgment without mercy.

If we would not destroy our own souls, then let us neither corrupt the doctrine of grace by mixing our own works with it, nor abuse it by turning it into lasciviousness.

II. If our salvation be from the grace of God, then we ought to try and examine whether we be under the saving influence of the grace of God. There are many under the word who have their fancies raised and their affections for a time stirred with what they hear of the grace of God, and yet they have no true sense and no right favour of the grace of God, but
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are utter strangers to the purging, cleansing, and renewing virtue and efficacy of it. We cannot be too strict in our enquiries to know whether we are partakers of the grace of God, and whether we are under the powerful operations of it: It may be said how may we know that we are saved by grace? I answer we may know by five things that we are saved by grace.

1. When we are partakers of the saving grace of God, we shall then be thankful for it, and be filled with the admiration of it. It is a privilege so glorious for us to be the objects of God's grace, that we can never sufficiently admire it. The grace of God is so rich that it passes knowledge: Grace keeps infinite wrath from falling down upon us, and delivers us from hell, which is the reward of our sins: Grace moves God to give himself, his Son, his Spirit, and heaven to us. Grace hath in it all that is most indulgent in love, all that is most sweet in bounty, all that is most tender in mercy, all that is most communicative in liberality. When we consider what the grace of God is by which we are saved, we cannot then but be thankful for it and admire it: when
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we have seen and experienced any thing of the grace of God, our hearts will be prepared to praise God for it, and we shall join in the song of the Angels. *Luke. ii. 14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.* Thankfulness for grace is that which God requires of us, and expects from us. We are bound to praise God for his creating goodness, but much more for his redeeming grace: When we can do nothing by way of payment, we must do something by way of thankfulness: We cannot drink of the cup of God's wrath by way of satisfaction, but we may take up and drink of the cup of salvation by way of thanksgiving: we cannot satisfy God for our sins, but we may return thanks to him for the gift of a surety who satisfied for us.

When believers have once passed out of time, and come to stand on the pinnacle of eternal felicity, from whence they will look down to the low, loathsome, and miserable state from which they were redeemed, their hearts will then burn with seraphick love to God, and their mouths will be filled with the praises of his grace: When

believers have got into a still, quiet haven, after they have been tossed as with a tempest, and take a view of that endless state of unspeakable joy and delight, which is before them, they will then for ever sing a song of praise to the Lamb on the throne, who redeemed them unto God by his blood. If thankfulness for the grace of God will be the work of eternity, then, if we be saved by grace, we shall not neglect to begin this work in time.

2. When we are the objects of saving grace, we shall then be humbled for our sins. When the saving grace of God is made known to us, we then think that we can neither rise too high in our affections to Christ, nor lie too low before God in abhorring our selves for our sins. Grace abates all aspiring pride empties the creature, lays proud flesh in the dust, exalts God, and gives all to Christ. When *David* shewed kindness to *Mephibosheth*, the good man used very abasing terms of himself. 2. *Sam.* viiii. 8. *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog, as I am?* he calls himself not only a dog, but a dead dog. A believer says; What amazing

zing grace is it in God to take me into the number of his chosen, who am a disloyal subject, a most unprofitable and unfaithful servant, and a hell deserving sinner! A believer doth not speak such words out of form and custom, but his heart seals to what his tongue speaks. When a believer views the supreme excellencies of God, and then beholds the sink of impurity and corruption which is in his own heart, he is at a loss for words, and cannot find out or invent expressions to utter and speak forth his own sinful unworthiness: When he looks upon his inward defilements, and sees how deformed he is, he then detests himself, and judges no less than hell it self (if he were dealt with according to his sins) to be his portion. Every believer thinks that if he got to heaven, none there will have more reason than he, to magnifie and exalt the free grace of God. This self abasing temper is in all them who are saved by grace.

3. When we are saved by grace, we shall then abound in love to God. Where grace is received, it raises a strong reciprocal love to all the three persons in the Godhead, to all the precepts, ways, and

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ordinances of God. Grace makes a believer willing to do every thing for Christ, to leave and lose all for his truth, to follow him into a prison, into a barren wilderness, into the water, and into the fire of martyrdom. The reciprocal love which is in believers to Christ, carries them through all difficulties, and prepares them to endure all hardships for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. When Christ has given himself to a sinner, the sinner then gives himself to Christ, and is like the apostle *Paul* who spoke with great courage and undaunted resolution. *Acts* xxi. 13. *What mean you to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

When the woman in the [gospel had a sense of the pardoning grace of God, she washed the feet of Christ with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. *Luke*. vii. 38. What a remarkable change did the appearance of the grace of God to her soul make in her? The hair of her head, wherein she had gloried before, when she was under the power of lust, must now be employed to
wipe

wipe the feet of Christ. Why? I answer, because she loved much. Why did she love much? I answer, because much was forgiven her *ver.* 47. *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.*

When we partake of the grace of God, there will then be in us a love to Christ which is as strong as death to every lust. *Sol. Song.* viii. 6. *Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame.* Love to Christ is a strong death, but it is a kind death: It is a cruel death but it is cruel only to sin and lust. What kinder than that death which kills our lusts? What so cruel as that love which will not let sin live in us, against which cruelty is the greatest charity?

4. When we are under the communications of the grace of God, our hearts will then be broken with evangelical meltings, and we shall have great sorrow for the sins which God hath freely forgiven. If it were possible for a man, when he is in this world to lay his head over the very brink of hell, that he might hear the damned groan under the weight of their torments, and that he might see them roll

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in the midst of streams of brimstone, and receive without intermission the stripes and lashes of Gods infinite fury, this would terrifie him, but it would never break his heart for sin, as the grace of God doth.

When a man is under the greatest terrors of conscience, and when he sees sin in its damning power, but has no sight of a pardon, his fear of sin may then be great; but he neither sees so much evil in sin, nor hath so great a fear of it, as a believer, whose sins are not only forgiven but who hath the assurance of his pardon: The reason is this, a sinner under the greatest terrors of conscience, before he believes in Christ, fears sin only as it brings destruction on his soul; but a believer fears sin, as that which not only deserves hell, but is most hateful to God, and was the cause of Christ's death: Shall I (says a believer) live in sin, when Christ died for it? far be it from me: Shall that be my life, which was his death? it shall never be.

A believer mourns for sin, and is confounded in himself, when he is sensible that he has complied with temptations. *Luke, xxii. 61 62. The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.* When Christ looked upon

upon *Peter*, what followed? I answer; *Peter went out and wept bitterly.* Christ's look, in a way of favour, has great power in it; for it is convincing and converting to sinners; and it is melting and alluring to restore fallen believers.

(1.) It is convincing and converting to sinners: it was so to *Zaccheus* *Luke. xix. 5. 6.* *Jesus look'd up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus make haste and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house: and he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.* When Christ gives a sinner a loving glance of his eye, the soul of the sinner is then immediately taken with the truths and ways of God; his heart is changed, and the devil is disappointed: Christ has soft looks as well as soft words; which have power in them to break the very heart of stone.

(2.) It is melting and alluring to restore fallen believers; it was so to *Peter.* It was a sweet look of love and mercy from the gracious face of Christ, that broke *Peters* heart, opened his eyes at the crowing of the cock, to be the flood-gates of his godly sorrow, and made him weep bitterly for his sins. If we consider that which was

the efficient cause of *Peter's* sorrow, we may then say, that *Peter's* tears came first from Christ's eyes: One look of Christ melted *Peter* into tears, because it carried in it a bright beam of divine love which pierced his heart: Christ's look was as a glass, wherein *Peter* saw the tender love of Christ's heart towards him, when he was most worthy of his hatred, because of his backsliding. Christ's looks of good will are silent looks, but of great virtue, not only to be understood but to work. As the looks of Christ in a way of wrath, are irresistible in their force, to terrifie, cast down and strike dead the stoutest of his enemies; so the looks of Christ, in a way of love, have a mighty energy in them to quicken sinners, when they are in a death of sin, and to restore believers, when they are under great backslidings, as well as to comfort them when they are in a depth of sorrow. Christ's looks of goodwill open our eyes when we are under spiritual blindness, and awaken us out of our security, that we may not sleep the sleep of death. The eyes of Christ, opened upon us in a way of grace, are like the morning Sun to send forth rays and beams, that are not

not more inlightening than they are inlivening and alluring.

5. When we are saved by grace, and have a sense of our salvation by it in our selves, we shall then with great industry follow after holiness. We must not expect to obtain because we run, and yet we do not run in vain: our running in the way of holiness produces no life, but it is the effect of it; it does not make us to live, but it proves us to be alive.

The devil tempts sinners to abuse the doctrine of grace, and erroneous men stigmatize it as if it were the fomentor of lewd practices; but it is the spring of all true obedience, and is full of heavenly rhetoric to persuade us to a godly life. The notion of free grace may be in the head when practical Religion is banished from the life: but the experimental knowledge of the doctrine of free grace doth ever produce holiness of heart and life. When God manifests his grace to sinners, he then gives them a new life which is a life of holiness; his love is new wine that makes the bottles new when it is put into them. The sunshine of God's love gilds no vessels but such as it makes vessels of honour, and

and it sets a lustre upon none but such as are God's jewels. A believer who hath a sense of the grace of God towards him, can no more live in a course of known, wilful, and presumptuous sins, than he can despair of Gods mercy; he can no more be guilty of a continued breach of God's commands, than of a rooted habitual unbelief concerning God's promise. When the grace of God was exceeding abundant towards *Paul*, it then wrought in him both faith in Christ, and love to him. 1. *Tim. i. 14.* *The grace our of Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* When the apostle had the experience of the exceeding abundant grace of God, towards him who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, it had this effect upon him, that he abounded not only in faith to believe in Christ for salvation, but in love to him, which put him upon all acts of obedience. The grace of God is magnified by working in us, as well as in justifying of us without works.

If we be thankful for the grace of God, and be filled with the admiration of it; if we be more and more humbled for our sins; if we abound in our love to God

if our hearts be broken with evangelical meltings, and if we have sorrow for the sins which God freely forgives; and if we industriously follow after higher degrees of holiness, then we are partakers of the grace of God, and he will glorify his grace in our eternal salvation. This is that which of all things is most comfortable for us to know, therefore we must pray to God to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of our minds being inlightened, we may know what is the hope of our calling, and what are the riches of the glory of that heavenly inheritance which is the gift of God's grace.

III. If the salvation of sinners be only by grace, and if it be all of grace, then sinners have the greatest encouragement to come to God through Christ for salvation. It is most reasonable for sinners to hope for that salvation which is all of grace, but it unreasonable for them to despair about it. There are four things, which I shall urge upon sinners who are yet in a lost state, as counsel from the word of God for their good.

1. Sinners must be humbled for their
sins,

sins, but they must not distrust the greatness of divine mercy to forgive them. When unregenerate men come under convictions for sin, they are then afraid that God will have no favour for them, because they measure the grace which is in God, by the mercy which is in themselves: They know that if their fellow creatures had offended them as often and as much, as they have done God, they could never lay aside all thoughts of revenge against them: When they should conceive of the grace of God as infinitely great, they bring it down to the low standard of mercy which is in their own breasts, and so lay a stumbling block in their own way. We ought to be ashamed of our sins, because they are most hateful to God, who sees them in all their circumstances, and can punish them eternally; but we must neither doubt of the power of God, nor despair of his good will, to pardon them. When our sins are both great and most numerous, we must hope in the mercy of God for the pardon of them, because God can never see more sins in us than he can forgive. Sinners must not entertain low thoughts of the grace of God, but
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ought to believe it to be infinitely great, and far above all the thoughts which they can have of it. When the prodigal feared sharp chiding, his father provided good cloathing and a rich banquet for him. *Luke xv. 22, 23, 24.*

2. Sinners must wait for God to be merciful to them, and to work grace in them under all seeming discouragements and present delays: They must do as the lame man did, who lay at the pool side of *Bethesda*. *John. chap. v.* The lame man for his seniority might have been the master of the hospital where he lay, because he had been a cripple longer than most men live in this world; he had been a cripple thirty eight years. The lame man waited for a cure, when there was no probability that he would ever get it.

(1.) They only who first got into the waters after they had been troubled, were healed *ver. 4.* *Whosoever first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.* The priority of entrance into the waters could not be obtained without speed and haste, because when there were several that waited for a cure they all strove who should first

first enter into the water. The lame man's case seemed altogether hopeless, because he could not run, before he was able to go.

(2.) As he could not go into the waters himself, so he had no money to hire others to put him into the pool. *ver. 7. I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.* It had been so often, and he might have thought that it would be so always; he had no money to hire help, and others had no charity to give him their assistance. If the lame man had followed the reasonings of his own heart he would soon have left off waiting; but he was found in the use of means under the greatest discouragements; and what followed his patient waiting? I answer when he could not go to health, healing then came to him: When he was waiting for a cure without success, Christ then came and healed him. *ver. 8. 9.*

Sinners can do nothing to convert themselves, and yet they must come under the sound of the word: If they have for some years waited under the word, without feeling the quickening power of the Spirit
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of God, they must still wait longer, because when they cannot come to life, Christ, who is the only spring of all spiritual life, can come to them.

3. Sinners must expect all grace from God. God is *the God of all grace.* 1. Pet. v. 10. As he is the God of all grace, so he hath it all to give. There is in the grace of God a sufficiency for the greatest sinners: Grace is a deep river which runs under ground from eternity, but breaks out in time, and we may hope that it runs by every mans door, who sits under the calls and invitations of the Gospel: It is in this river that the greatest sinner may bath his leprous soul, wash away his filth, get his wounds healed, and his dross purged out.

4. Sinners must receive not only all grace from God through Christ, but they must receive all grace as a free gift. God gives all grace, not for any thing done by us, but he gives it freely: The gift of all grace comes most freely to us. This truth is the greatest encouragement to sinners, and yet when men are in their natural state they neither can, nor will receive it without a divine illumination: They
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are as fierce disputers against the free grace of gods promises, as they are obstinate rebels against his laws: They care as little to relie on his mercy, as to conform to his holiness: They have rather less will to be saved by his free grace, than to be guided by the rule of his word and to submit to his sovereignty: They rear up a partition wall of qualifying dispositions and conditional preparations in themselves, to fit and give themselves a meetness to receive the grace of God, and by this course they separate themselves from the gifts of his grace.

All sinners ought to be convinced of the spirit of pride, which is naturally in them, that so they may come to God with a sense of their own poverty, and not with any opinion of their own riches: When they ask of God or pray for the great things of eternal life, they must not come as merchants, but as supplicants: They must come as they that must receive all, but can bring nothing: They must come to be relieved by God, but not to drive a trade with him: They must beg alms from God, but they must not stand upon terms with him: They must pray to
God

God to set their hands to work, that they may serve him; but they must never presume to serve for wages, lest God give them what they deserve. What wages can we sinners merit as our own, when we are slaves bought with a price, to whom stripes are only due? We must not trust to our own works, as if our suit would be obtained by our own sweat and pain: When we have travelled through all duties and performances, we must at last seek for salvation only from the grace of God through Christ: we must be sensible of our inability, but we must not despond, because all grace is freely given. A beggar doth not forbear to ask, because he can do nothing to claim what he wants as his right, but he asks with more importunity because of his impotency and unworthiness. As we are sinners we are the greatest beggars in the world, and our plea with God must be, that we are beggars that cannot work: It is our forcible plea that we are beggars: When we have nothing to say for our selves, we must then plead that we are not only indigent, but most impotent beggars: We are not only beggars that need every thing;

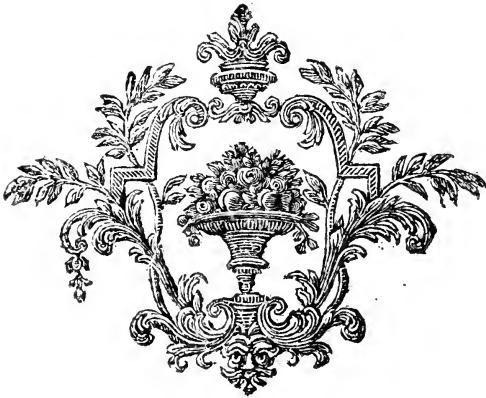
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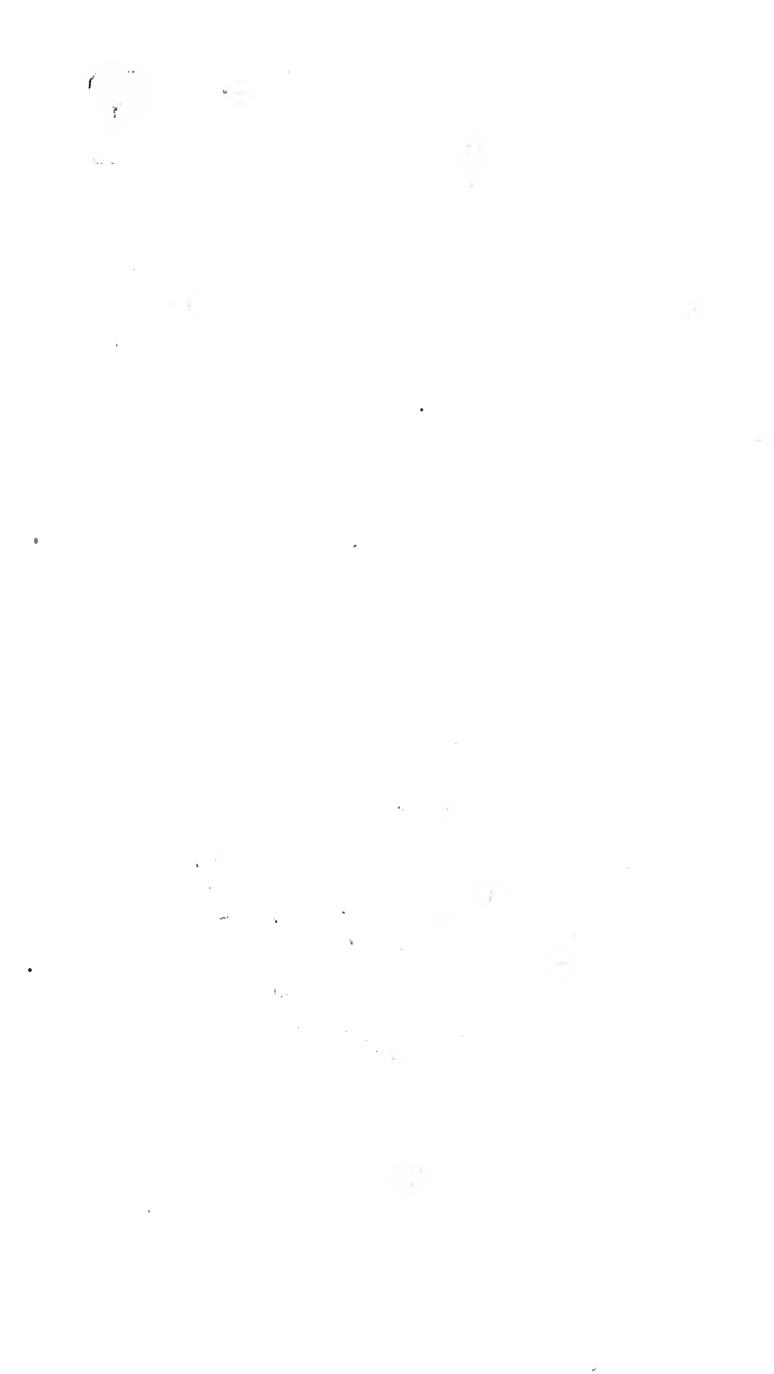
but are beggars so feeble that we can do no work. When we plead with God that we are beggars that can do no work for him, and can do nothing for our selves, he will then give all grace freely to us.

We must come to God through Christ, for eternal Life as a free gift. *Rom. vi. 23. The gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The consideration of eternal life, as it is a gift freely given through Jesus Christ, is that which may confute all our unbelieving fears, it may silence all the carnal reasonings of our perplexed spirits, which spring from a legal root, and it will put faith into our faint and feeble souls.

If eternal life be not only a gift but a free gift, why ought not we (altho we be most unworthy sinners) to expect it as a free gift, as much as any other persons whatsoever, when we ask it of God through Jesus Christ? When all that have got to heaven were saved by free grace without any regard to a worthiness of their own, why may we not hope to be saved by grace as well as they, and to be brought one day to join with them to celebrate the praises of God, as he is the God of all grace
for

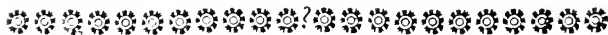
for ever and ever? Let us not cease to pray to God for all grace as his free gift, and let us stand ready to receive it, and then in heaven we shall to eternity admire the glory of that free grace, by which we are saved.







OF THE
HEALING INFLUENCE
OF
CHRIST,
AS A
Sun of Righteousness.








OF THE
HEALING INFLUENCE
OF
CHRIST.



MAL. IV. 2.

*Unto you that fear my Name, shall
the Sun of Righteousness arise with heal-
ing in his Wings; and ye shall go forth
and grow up as calves of the Stall.*

 Here were five things in the first temple, which were not in the second. The cloud which was the symbol of God's presence; the fire which consumed the sacrifice; the *Urim* and *Thummim* by which God gave

gave directive and determinate answers, as to matters of fact, altho' not as to points of doctrine; the ark wherein the Law was kept; and a succession of prophets; there were some prophets in the second temple, but not a succession of prophets. Some indeed say the *Bath col*, or *filia vocis*, which was one voice proceeding out of another, like that which we call an Echo, supplied the want of a succession of prophets in the second temple; this is mentioned by learned *Ainsworth* on *Exod. xxviii. ver 30*. But what is said, of the *Bath-Col* is without ground; it was but a politick invention to reconcile the contending followers of *Schammai* and *Hillel*. After *Malachi* there were no prophets till *Zacharias* and *John Baptist*, who were prophets rather by grace than by office. The silence of the prophets after *Malachi* served for two ends.

1. It was to stir up the people to expect the coming of the great prophet. The loss of signs and miracles and the great eclipse of prophetic light, was to teach the Church that the great prophet was coming, in whom all signs, miracles, and prophecy were to meet.

2. It

2. It was to engage them to cleave, more to the written word of God. *Malachi* was the last of all the prophets under the old Testament, and because no prophet was to come between him and *Zacharia* and *John Baptist*, he therefore concludes his prophecy with a short exhortation to the *Jews* to remember the law of *Moses*.

In this fourth chapter the prophet further prosecutes what he had said in the chapter before, for the clearing of God's justice from the calumnies of the *Jews*, who blasphemously charged God as if he had no more regard to them who served him, than to them who served him not. In the first verse the prophet speaks of a day that would make a difference between the evil and the good, and a fearful day he say's it would be. *For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* This day is meant of the coming of Christ in the flesh, which was a fearful and a fiery day to unbelieving stubborn sinners.

1. It is said to *burn as an oven.* By the fire

fire of an oven we must understand all judgments, but especially the wrath of God, as it breaks out upon sinners. God has a purging, cleansing and refining fire for his own people, to consume their corruptions and their fading comforts, and this is a fire for preservation; but he has the fire of an oven for his enemies, and this is a consuming fire. God kindles many fires upon the wicked, but he himself will be a consuming fire to them: The whole of wicked men is as combustible matter, when fire out of the mouth of God devours them. *Pf. xviii. 8.* When God pours out wrath upon sinners, it devours them like fire; natural fire is a great devourer, but the mystical fire of Gods vindictive justice is infinitely a greater devourer: The wicked because of sin are as stubble, and the wrath of God is as the fire of an oven to devour them; and it does with greater fierceness destroy them, than the fire of an oven does the fuel that we throw into it.

2. When the wrath of God burns against the wicked it makes a full end in destroying them; *it leaves them neither root nor branch*: This notes a total consumption
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on of them. This was fulfilled as to the *Jews*, when *Jerusalem* was destroyed by the *Romans*; it is fulfilled upon all sinners, when God enters into judgment against them, for he then consumes them in his wrath, and he will consume them to eternity.

In the Text there is a promise of Christ's coming to the godly; his coming to them is as comfortable, as his coming against the wicked is terrible.

We have four things in the words.

I. The character of them who are revived and comforted by the coming of Christ. *But unto you that fear my name.* The name of God is taken four ways.

1. For the reverence which is due to him, and the manifestative glory which belongs to him in this world. *Josbua vii. 9. What wilt thou do unto thy great name.* It is as if he had said; If *Israel* who are thy *covenant people*, and to whom thou hast promised to give the land of *Canaan*, be destroy'd and fall before their enemies, what will become of thy renown and glory in this world?

2. For his worship, *Jer. vii. 18. Go to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at first; that is, where I set my worship.* As a man is discriminated and known from others

thers by his name, so is God by his worship; and as it is a reproach to a man, when we call him by a nickname, so it is a dishonour to God when we call him out of his name by offering up a false worship to him: When we call God out of his true name, and call him by a false name, we may than fear that he will not hold us guiltless, but will punish us for our presumptuous and daring folly, as he did *Aarons* two Sons. *Levit.* X. 1. 2.

3. For the strength of God. *Psalms*. xliv.

5. *Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*

4. For the attributes of God which recommend him to us, as the only object of our confidence, and which encourage us to trust in him: The name of God is as sweet Ointment poured forth. *Sol. Song.* i. 3. *Thy name is as ointment poured forth.* Nothing spreads it self more then oil, and takes up a larger space wheresoever it drops: it is the name of God that fills the the soul of a believer with life and comfort, and it has something in it to relieve him in every distress.

To fear the name of God is to do four things.

1. It

1. It is not to slight God and his threatenings; but it is to fear his glorious name, and to tremble at his word. *Deut.* xxviii. 58.

Isa. lxvi. 5.

2. It is not to murmur at his rebukes; but to submit to his fatherly corrections.

3. It is not to go on securely in Sin; but to turn at God's reproof.

4. It is to trust in God and to cleave to him. A legal fear drives us from God, but a filial fear of his name will draw us to him.

II. The title that is given to Christ; he is called *the Sun of righteousness*.

III. That which Christ is said to do, as he is a Sun of righteousness.

1. He is said to *arise*; he was not risen in a proper sense to the Patriarchs and Prophets under the law: he did shoot out some beams which made it to be twilight to them, but he did not arise unto them: it is under the Gospel-administration that Christ arises as a Sun of righteousness: When Christ was incarnate the Sun of righteousness did arise in his own person, and in the light of the gospel-dispensation, whereby the heavens were opened to give
believers

believers clear visions of their happy future state.

2. He is said to arise with *healing in his wings*. The wings of Christ are the rays and beams of light, which he casts forth upon dark sinners.

(1.) He disperses the clouds of their sinful ignorance and misery.

(2.) He brings in his wings a quickening heat, or a chearful comfortable light, which is a light of life, health, and happiness.

IV. The benefit which redounds to them on whom Christ arises as he is a Sun of righteousness: They are made free, and they grow in grace.

1. They are made free. *Ye shall go forth*. It is as if God had said thus by the prophet; You were in the prison of sin and sorrow before, but when the Sun of righteousness arises upon you, you shall have freedom, and shall go forth; you shall have the liberty of the Spirit, which brings with it vigour, joy, and enlargement of heart.

2. They grow in grace. *Ye shall grow up as calves of the stall*. To grow up as calves of the stall, is to grow and increase in grace: When Christ arises upon sinners they first go forth out of a state of darkness and

and thralldom, and then they grow up as calves of the stall; they grow in all grace, and because of their growth in grace they are fat, strong, and have a sprightly motion.

The Doctrin which I shall raise from the words is this,

It is a great blessing, or privilege to have CHRIST to arise upon us, as he is a Sun of Righteousness.

In speaking to this Doctrin, I shall do four things,

I. I shall shew why Christ is a sun of righteousness.

II. I shall shew what it is for Christ to arise upon us as a Sun of righteousness.

III. I shall prove that it is a great blessing, to have Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness to arise upon us.

IV. I shall make application of the doctrine.

CHAP.



C H A P. I.

*Reasons why CHRIST is called
a Sun of Righteousness.*

I Shall shew why Christ is a sun of righteousness, he is so for two reasons.

I. It is in him that the righteousness of God gloriously shines forth.

II. It is in him and from him, that we have all our righteousness.

I. Christ is a Sun of righteousness, because it is in him that the righteousness of God gloriously shines forth. In the obedience of Christ's life and death as he is mediator, the law of God was not only fulfill'd in its precept and penalty ; but the righteousness of God was more illustrated

in

in all the glory of, it than it would have been, if all the sons of *Adam* had either retain'd their innocency, or if they had been doom'd to eternal sufferings upon their fall; because in the obedience and sufferings of Christ there was not the obedience and sufferings of a meer creature, but the obedience and sufferings of one that was God as well as man: It is in Christ that the righteousness of God is declared in the full perfection of it. *Rom. iii. 26.* *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* God declares his righteousness as he is the justifier of him that believeth in *Jesus*, because Christ as our surety answered all the demands of the righteous law of God.

If God had either dispensed with his own law, or given a new law of milder terms and conditions, when the law given to *Adam* was broken, this would have blemish'd and obscured his righteousness instead of declaring it, and it would have justified the devil in his falsehoods, and in the malicious aspersions which he endeavoured to throw upon God. *Gen. iii. 4, 5.* *The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not*
H surely

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surely die: For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: And ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. Ye shall not (said the serpent) *surely die; It is as if the devil had said thus; Fear not to eat the forbidden fruit, for altho' death be threatened as a penalty for the violation of the law, yet the penalty which is threatened shall not be inflicted; if you break the law of God, you shall not be punished with death for the breach of it. The framers and minters of a new law, do not consider, and they are not sensible, how they plead the devil's cause, and bear witness for him against the God of truth. God would not darken the glory of his justice, and he would not countenance the devil in his false insinuations and blasphemous surmises, and therefore he required from Christ a full conformity to the precept of the law, in a way of obedience, and he inflicted on him the penalty of the law in its greatest rigour, as he was the surety of sinners, and had taken their place upon him. When God punished his own Son for our sins, he gave the compleatest declaration of his righteousness that ever was, or will be:*

All

All other expressions of his justice compared to this, are but faint and languishing discoveries of it.

It is in Christ that God magnifies his grace in the salvation of sinners, and declares his righteousness in the punishment of sin. God delivered up Christ to death for our sins; by this he shewed forth the riches of his grace: and when God gave Christ to die for us, he declared his righteousness in punishing sin to the utmost; by this he gave the brightest discovery of his justice.

The beautiful and glorious conjunction which there is of the infinite mercy and infinite righteousness of God in Christ, may comfort despairing souls, and it may awaken and terrifie presumptuous sinners.

1. It may comfort despairing souls, who are not easily perswaded to believe and hope that God is so gracious and merciful, as they would have him to be. Trembling souls ought to hope and not to despair, because God has declared his rich mercy in Christ: It was wonderful mercy for God to give his own Son for sinners, but for God to give him to suffer death attended

with the severest and most fearful circumstances, was mercy so superlatively great, that it cannot come within the circle of our thoughts, and it ought to separate from us all distrust and despair: When God has given Christ to suffer the most bitter things for us, shall we doubt whether he will give him to save us?

2. It may awaken and terrifie presumptuous sinners, who are not brought without great difficulty to believe, that God is infinitely just to punish sin. Impenitent sinners ought not to presume, because God has declared his infinite righteousness in the punishment of sin; Never any thing declared more the evil of sin and the infinite hatred of God against it, than the death of Christ: *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief. Isa. liii. 10.* How did it please God to bruise Christ, and to put him to pain? I answer; As the putting him to pain shewed forth the glory of his grace in the redemption of sinners, and the glory of his righteousness in the punishment of sin. If sin be so hateful to God that he declared his infinite hatred against it, when it was laid upon Christ, ought it not then

then to be that which we must fear and hate? If we have any sense left in us, the sight of Christ dying for sin, will make sin to die in us, and will raise the fire of our hatred against it: If we can hear of Christ's bearing the wrath of God for sin, and yet suffer our affections to be knit to any unmortified lust, we are then under the judgment of a feared conscience, and that God who spared not his own Son when sin was laid upon him, will not spare us, when he finds sin not only upon us but reigning in us. God that declared his infinite righteousness in punishing Christ for sin, will not pass by sin in us when we live in it, and desire not to be delivered from it, but he will make the fire of his justice to burn against us for ever. Christ was offered up to take away sin, and the infinite justice of God was declared in punishing Christ for sin: This lets sinners see what they deserve, and what they must expect, if they have not Christ to save them from their sins: They deserve not only to die, but to be wholly burnt in the fire of Gods wrath: And if they have not Christ to save them from their sins, they must dwell in the fire of God's justice

which can neither be quench'd, nor will annihilate them: They must ever live in death, and they must ever die in life. God has declared his infinite mercy in Christ, that we may not despair, but rejoyce in the hope of salvation; and he has declared his righteousness in the punishment of sin, that we may not presume to live in sin but may keep up the greatest hatred against it, and be more and more afraid of it.

II. Christ is a Sun of righteousness, because it is in him, and from him, that we have all our righteousness. It is in Christ that we have a righteousness which is imputed, and it is from Christ that we have a righteousness which is inherent or implanted: In the one Christ presents us to God, as he is our judge, that we may be justified; in the other he will present us to himself, as he is our bridegroom or husband.

I. It is in Christ that we have a righteousness which is imputed, or righteousness to justify us before God. Christ is called the Lord our righteousness *Jer. xxiii. 6.* *This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.* Christ was made
sin

sin for us, that we might be made righteous in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. *He has made him to be sin for us, who know no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Christ was made sin for us, and we are made righteous in him.

(1.) Christ was made sin for us. How was Christ made sin for us? I answer; It is far from reaching the sense of the words to say, Christ was made a sacrifice for sin, or felt the effects of sin; Christ was made sin, so as to have sin it self in a law-sense laid upon him.

[1] If sin it self had not been formally imputed to Christ, he could not have been justly punished for it. It is a violation of justice to inflict punishment, where there is no sin either inherent or imputed. sin was imputed to Christ that he might be punished for it in a judical way: When Christ knew not what it was to desire sin or to act it, he knew what it was to have it legally translated to himself from the sinners for whom he died; when he knew not what it was to have the least motion in his heart towards sin, he knew what it was to bear it.

[2] Christ was made that by imputation

tation which is directly opposite to righteousness. What is that which stands in a direct opposition to righteousness? I answer; it is sin, as sin is a transgression of the law of God. Christ not only suffered for sin, but he came under the formal imputation of it that he might be punished for it; he bore sin up to the cross, that he might there die for it. *1 Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bore our Sins in his body on the tree, or, to the tree.*

(2.) We are made righteous in Christ. Christ was made sin for us by imputation, when he knew not sin by way of inherence, that we who are inherently sinful may be righteous by imputation. We not only reap the fruits and effects of Christ's righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ it self is imputed to us, that in his very righteousness we may stand before God as our judge, without fault or rebuke, as we are relatively considered.

The commutation which is made between Christ and us, will be the wonder of eternity: Christ who knew no sin, was made sin for us; this was such a depth of humiliation, that the Son of God could not stoop lower: We that are sinners are
made

made the righteousness of God in him; this exaltation is so great, that we sinful creatures can not be dignified more or raised higher.

2. It is from Christ that we have a righteousness that is inherent, or a righteousness which is for our sanctification. It is by the Spirit that Christ sanctifies and cleanses us, and makes us meet for his affectionate and eternal embraces. *Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.* Believers have now a justifying righteousness which is without any defect, and they shall have a perfect holiness, that will be without any imperfection. We have our sanctification from Christ, and when it is brought to perfection, Christ will then present us to himself without spot or blemish, for the completing of our bridal union to him in the fruitive part of it.

Christ

Christ presents us to God, and he will present us to himself.

(1.) Christ presents us to God, as he is a judge: It is in his own righteousness alone as it is imputed to us, that he presents us to God as our judge, that we may be justified before him, and received into his favour.

(2.) He will present us to himself as our head and husband. It is in a personal inherent holiness, when it is once consummated, that he will present us to himself as our husband, that we may for ever enjoy the nearest fellowship with him in a state of glory. We are now full of spots, wrinkles and blemishes, but Christ will present us to himself as our husband, in the beauty of a perfect inherent holiness.





C H A P. II.

What it is for Christ to arise upon us, as a Sun of Righteousness.

I Shall shew what it is for Christ to arise upon us, as he is a Sun of righteousness. Christ arises as a Sun of righteousness three ways, *viz.* personally ; doctrinally, and by his Spirit.

I. Christ arose as a Sun of righteousness personally in his incarnation. When he was manifested in our flesh as the great mystery of godliness, he then arose personally as a Sun of righteousness, the day of gospel light did then shine forth, and all the Levitical shadows did flee away : but all such as saw and beheld him, when he personally arose in his incarnation, were not brought out of darkness. *Job. i. 10, 11. He was in the world, and the World*

world knew him not : He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

II. Christ arises as a Sun of righteousness doctrinally, in the publication or preaching of the gospel. He arises doctrinally by the preaching of the gospel upon many, who never see any comeliness or excellency in him, because the eyes of their minds are not spiritually enlightened : When there is light without, they have nothing but darkness within : When the sun is risen it is not day but night with them, because they are blind and see not the light. When four sorts of hearers of the word are mentioned by Christ, it is but one sort of them that understand what they hear, and bring forth fruit. *Math. xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.*

III. Christ arises as a Sun of righteousness by his Spirit. Christ arises by his Spirit, when the Spirit makes the word of God, that we either read or hear, to be effectual to enlighten us, or to give us a spiritual sight of Christ. When the Spirit enlightens us by the word, we have then a right understanding concerning Christ, and we behold him in the
glory

glory of his person, in the usefulness of his offices, and in the fulness of his purchased graces. When Christ as a Sun of righteousness arises upon sinners by the enlightening work of his Spirit, he does two things.

1. He brings to their view and sight what they knew not before. *Isa. lii. 16. I will bring the blind by a way they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known : I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do not unto them, and not forsake them.* Christ here promises to do three things.

(1.) To enlighten ignorant sinners, and to lead them in a way wherein they have not gone before. *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*

(2.) To remove all obstruction and impediments out of their way. *I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight,*

(3.) To keep up a watch over sinners when he has enlightened and brought them into a new and living way. *These things will I do, and not forsake them.*

When

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When sinners have no light to find out the way of life, when they are compassed about with darkness, and are ready to stumble and fall every step which they take, Christ then arises upon them as a Sun of righteousness, to give them light, to remove all stumbling blocks out of their way, and to be a sure guide to lead them to heaven.

2. When Christ enlightens us as a sun of righteousness by his Spirit, he does it with a power that is irresistible. The approach of his light to us is like the rising of the sun in the east at such a point, notwithstanding all the darkness of the preceding night : As the rising sun cannot be kept down, but mounts the heavens and fills the world with his light ; so when Christ breaks into our souls, by his Spirit, as he is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation ; then all the clouds of our ignorance cannot hide from us the light of truth, and all the powers of darkness cannot prevent the manifestations which Christ makes to us. When Christ rents the veil from off our hearts and from his own face, he then darts rich influences of light and life into our souls.

souls. When Christ arises upon us in this way and manner, to enlighten us in our darkness, our hearts are then attracted to believe in him and to receive him as our only Saviour.



C H A P. III.

The proof of the Doctrine.

I Shall prove that it is a great blessing to have Christ as a Sun of righteousness to arise upon us. The sun in the firmament is not so full of light, as Christ is full of grace, mercy, love, and all goodness. When Christ arises upon us as a Sun of righteousness, he brings us out of a state of darkness and gives us light.

The light which comes to us from Christ, is five fold ; It is a light that is sure and certain ; It is medicinal or healing ;

ing ; it is vital ; it is comforting ; and it is a light that is never put out, but grows brighter and brighter till it comes to the light of glory.

I. It is a light that is sure and certain. All the light of knowledge which is got by the improvement of reason without the direction of supernatural light, is uncertain ; and because it is uncertain, it brings disquietment and disturbances. When a man has made the most diligent search after the knowledge of things that are physical and moral, he gets only trouble as the fruit of all his toil and labour. *Eccl. xii. 12. Much study is a weariness to the flesh.* Much reading of books when the holy Scriptures are either neglected, or not understood, is a fruitless undertaking, because it spends a man's time, dulls his spirits, and wears out his strength, but brings no satisfactory knowledge. Much study or reading is a noble employment and that which highly becomes intelligent creatures ; but when it is without the study of the Scriptures and without the knowledge of Christ, it brings no rest, but leaves men under endless perplexities ; because in all their enquiries
after

after knowledge they meet with many difficulties that gravel and put them to a stand. The less any one knows the more opinionated he is, and therefore young raw scholars are much more conceited of their knowledge, than students of many years standing: This confidence of theirs has no better foundation than ignorance. When a man has been a close student for forty or fifty years, he will then confess, if he be free to acknowledge the truth, that when he has sought after knowledge, with no small industry, he has then seen most of his own ignorance, and that in the secrets of nature he has not got beyond opinion, which leaves room for many doubts. All the light which unregenerate men have, is attended with great uncertainty, and because of the uncertainty of it, it brings no true satisfaction; but the light which comes from Christ is a sure and certain light, and they that are directed by it have present quiet, and they shall not go wrong. *Isa. xxxv. 8. An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness: The way-faring-men, though fools, shall not err therein.* Believers are often, because

the natural weakness of their understandings accounted fools by the wise men of this world; but because they are way-faring-men for heaven, they shall not lose their way: They shall not err either about that which is their foundation, or that which is their end, because they walk by a sure and certain light.

II. It is a medicinal or healing light. When Christ arises upon us, there is healing in his wings: The light which he gives us, brings health to our souls, and the health of our souls is that which the whole world cannot procure for us. We must distinguish between the wings of Christ and the healing which is in his wings. For Christ arises upon some sinners only with wings of light, but no healing in them; but he arises upon all them whom he saves, not only with wings of light, but with healing in his wings.

I. Christ arises upon some sinners only with light in his wings, but no healing in them. This is when sinners are under a work of the law that convinces them of sin; but does not turn them from it, and that stirs their corruptions but does
not

not mortifie them. When sinners are under this legal work, they may see their sin as *Judas* did, but they have no strength against it: They may be enlightened as they were, who yet proved final apostates. *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. Sinners that are under a legal work may be enlightened, but not renewed, they may have some sight of their guilt and filth; but no healing goes along with the light which breaks into their conscience: They are convinced of their guilt, but their sins are not pardon'd; they see their filth, but they are not purified; and they are scorch'd with Christ's heat in the ministry of the law, but not melted with his love in the promises of the gospel. When sinners come under a bare legal work, they are so far from repenting of their sins, that under the sense of judgment executed, they are like the worshippers of the beasts image, who did run to further outrages of wickedness. *Rev.* xvi. 8. 9. *The fourth Angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire, and the men were scorch'd with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which has power over these*

plagues: And they repented not. When they who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image were scorch'd with great heat, they became greater sinners; they blasphemed the name of God, and repented not. Pain promotes not repentance as self-deceiving sinners vainly think, who put off repentance to a sick bed: Pain in the natural tendency of it fits men to blaspheme God, but not to return to him by repentance. When sinners are most in pain, if they be left under the power of their corruptions, they are then in the greatest forwardness to act some sins. When the worshippers of the beasts image are scorch'd with great heat, they repent not but blaspheme the name of God.

When sinners are under the enlightening and awakening work of the law, and if the execution of the most terrible judgments be added to the work of the law which they are under, yet if their hearts be not softned with gospel-grace, they break out into greater enmity against God, and are prepared for extraordinary acts of wickedness. When sinners are enlightned but not converted, they prove the greatest rebels against God, and procure

cure for themselves the severest degree of condemnation.

2. Christ arises upon all them whom he saves, not only with wings of light but with healing in his wings: when he spreads his wings over them, he heals them

(1.) He pardons all their sins. He gives them *the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins.* Luke. i. 77. There are no gashes and wounds so deep and painful, as the gashes and wounds which sin makes in the soul, and when sin lies upon the conscience of a man who is made sensible of its weight, he is then sick unto death and must die eternally if he has not a cure; but when Christ arises upon him as a Sun of righteousness, and conveys to him the merit and vertue of his death, he is then healed: It is by the stripes of Christ, that the deep wounds of his soul are heal'd and closed up. *Isa. liii. 5. With his stripes we are heal'd.* When Christ carries away the guilt of sin, then the inhabitant in *Zion*, shall not say, I am sick. *Isai. xxxiii. 24. The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.* Why does the inhabitant in *Zion* say no more, I am sick: I answer

the reason is given in the following words. *The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*; or the people that dwell therein shall be discharged, or disburdened of their iniquity. **וְהָעָם הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּהַר נִשְׂא עֵין** To lie upon a sick bed with the burden of guilt pressing hard upon a wounded conscience, is a weight insupportable and that which will make the most hardened sinner roar out, as if he were in hell; but to have our conscience disburdened of all guilt, when we are sick, is that which softens and makes easy our sick-beds: If conscience be not sick of sin, it is not then any bodily sickness that will sink us, or cause us unbelievably to complain. When sickness comes upon us under the pressure of unpardoned sins, our burden will be much heavier than we can bear; but as the forgiveness of sin brings every mercy with it, so it takes away the sting and evil of sickness and of all other afflictions: When our iniquities are forgiven, if our bodily distempers be not healed, the pains which arise from them are sweetened.

(2.) Christ washes away their filth by the water of sanctification. When he heals them by his stripes, he sanctifies them by his

his Spirit, and then they go forth leaping and rejoice in his light. Christ heals the bruises and wounds of conscience by the forgiveness of sin, and he heals the sores which sin makes in the soul by sanctification.

It is a fruit of divine goodness that we have now bodily health, but sickness is that which will come, and we ought to expect it. Let us get that healing for our souls which is only in the wings of Christ, and then when we fall upon sick beds which will prove our death beds, there will be no smart in sickness; but what we shall be able to bear with patience, and the darkness of death shall not terrify us, when we have the light of a pardon'd state to comfort us.

III. It is a vital light. When Christ arises upon us as a Sun of righteousness, he quickens us: He not only sends forth light to disperse the darkness of our sins, but he communicates a vital influence to quicken our souls. The natural Sun pierces the bowels of the earth with his influence where there is no entrance for his beams; but Christ as a Sun of righteousness gives light where he bestows life: he is a

prophet to enlighten, and he is a Spirit of life to quicken.

There is a form of godliness without the power of it, which ungodly sinners may have. *2 Tim. iii. 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: From such turn away.* As there is a form or image of godliness without the power of it, so there is a form of knowledge without the life of it. *Rom. ii. 20. Thou hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.* The apostle spoke thus to the hypocritical Jew, who was as formal in his knowledge as in his worship. Thou hast (saith he) that which is *μόρφως γνώσις*, a similitude or resemblance of knowledge: it is as if the apostle had said thus; Thou hast a scheme or form of knowledge, and appearest to others to be learned in the law; but thou art utterly ignorant of what thou seemest to know, because thou hast only a formal and not a vital knowledge of the truth, unregenerate men may have a form of knowledge but this form of knowledge has no good fruits, because it is without life. Shadows without substance may hide and cover us for a while, and may induce others to think us to be better than we are, but all shadows

dows, forms, and appearances work nothing and leave nothing behind them that is valuable. A formal knowledge is a fruitless knowledge, and is not that light of life which every believer has from Christ. *John. viii. 12.* *He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.* It is as if Christ had said, he shall have a light that will fill him with life. When is it that we have this vital light, or this lively active light from Christ? I answer; when the impression of Scripture truths upon our minds does so powerfully sway and govern our whole souls that we cannot resist the evidence of the aforesaid truths, but are taken captive by them, receive our directions from them, and presently comply with them in all things which are contrary to the evil motions and inordinate desires of our own hearts. This is the vital light which we have from Christ, and it is that understanding which is a well spring of life. *Pro. xvi. 22.* *Understanding is a well spring of life unto him that has it.* As a living spring is always rising up and casting forth fresh streams of water; so that light of knowledge which is vital, rises up in pure holy heaven-ly

ly operations, and puts forth it self in new acts of life. This light which is vital, will not let a man take pleasure in sin, but it will extimulate him to all works of righteousness.

When Christ arises upon us as a Sun of righteousness, he first puts light into our minds, and then life into our souls, purity into our hearts, a principle of obedience into our wills, and holy desires into our affections.

IV. It is a comforting light. When Christ arises upon us as a Sun of righteousness, he comforts us, because he gives us a sight of God, as he is full of tender compassions to pity us in our distress, as he is long suffering to bear with us in our provocations, as he is infinite in his bounty to supply us in our greatest indigence, as he is faithful to fulfil all his promises, and as he is rich in mercy to forgive all our sins.

As the rising Sun not only enlightens the dark world, but beautifies and adorns it by spreading his wings of light over it, and gilds and enamels the lower creation with his bright and orient beams; so Christ by the light of his fa-

your and by the sweet benign influences of his grace, can exhilarate the most doubting disconsolate believers and can fill them with joy, after they have been long disquieted in their spirits, cast down with fears, wearied with temptations, and compassed about with the black shades of a tedious night of desertion. There can be no true comfort for our souls, but what is from the light of Christ shining into us.

V. It is a light that is never put out, but grows brighter and brighter till it does come to the light of glory. A deserted believer may complain as *Job* did. *Job xxx. 28. I went mourning without the sun.* A believer's sight of Christ may be clouded, because of the mists of his own ignorance and the feebleness of his faith, and when his sight of Christ is clouded, he is then grieved and troubled; but Christ as a Sun of righteousness, does always shine upon him: Christ is a Sun that rises but never sets: Where he once begins to shine, it will be day for ever. The light of prosperity that sinners have in this life is a declining light that shines less and less, till it ends in a night of eternal darkness; but

but the light which a believer has from Christ, altho' it be but a glimmering light at first, yet it rises up to a greater clearness: A believer at his first conversion, may be like the blind man to whom Christ gave sight, that saw men only as trees walking. *Mark viii. 24.* The light of a believer may be little at first, and it may often be overcast with clouds of darkness, but it shall shine out more and more till it does come to the perfect day. *Prov. iv. 18.* *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.* There are two things which may here be noted.

1. There is in the path of the just, a progress from a less to a greater light. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more.

2. The light which is in the path of the just, does not only grow clearer but it increases in its clearness till comes to be light in its perfection: It shines more and more unto the perfect day. When the just man is come to the day break, he then advances to the sun rising, and from the sun-rising to the brightness of the noon-day. Believers now see Christ dark-ly

ly through the glass of his word and ordinances ; but their sight of him shall grow more and more clear and distinct, till they see him face to face in heaven.

1. *Cor.* xiii. 12. *For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* When Christ has shined upon us, he will shine out with greater brightness upon us, till we shall come to see him without any veil or cloud, and shall have a direct immediate vision of the glory of his divine person for ever.

If the light which we have from Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness, be a light so sure and certain that we shall not go wrong or loose the right way when we are directed by it ; if it be a light that brings health to our souls that we may not die eternally ; If it be a vital light, or a light to quicken us to live to God, and to live with him ; if it be a light that can only bring true comfort to our souls ; and if it be a light that is never put out, but will grow brighter and brighter till it comes to the light of glory ; then it is a great blessing to have Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness to arise upon us.



C H A P. IV.

The Application of the Doctrine.

I Shall apply the Doctrine in four things.

I. If it be a great blessing to have Christ to arise upon us as he is a Sun of righteousness; then if there be any of you that never yet came under the healing wings of Christ, your condition is miserable, and it is the more miserable because you are ignorant of it: you are in darkness without light, and you are sick of the worst disease.

1. You are in darkness without light: if God should shut all the windows of heaven and spread forth thick clouds for curtains; the whole world would then be like a capacious grave, or the ne-
thermost

thermost dungeon ; and yet this would be a grateful shade if compared to the state of a sinner, who is left to the light of his deprived reason without supernatural irradiations from Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness.

2. You are sick of the worst disease, and must die of it if you be always ignorant of Christ who is the only physician of souls: There is no healing for you but under Christ's wings, and if your spiritual disease be not heal'd by him, you must die in your sins. Stumble not at that which is your only stay, and slight not Christ who can only give you light and health ; but get a sense of your disease, and enquire after him who is the only physician of souls.

(1.) Get a sense of your disease, that you may see how necessary it is for you to seek for health. When you think yourselves to be whole, you can then have no desire after the physician. *Matt. ix.*

12 They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick. When sinners presume that they are in a state of spiritual health, they will not then desire the help of Christ as he is a physician. When sinners

sinners are sensible of their disease, Christ has then begun his work and will perfect the cure.

(2.) Enquire after Christ who is the only physician of souls. Say in the words of the prophet. *Jer. viii. 22. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?* Say; is there no balm in Gilead for our festered wounds? is there no physician there for our souls which are already dead in sin, and must if there be no physician to give us life and health, come under the death of eternal punishment?

When you are under bodily sickness you then earnestly long and wish for health, and the strength of your desires after health renders the assistance of the physician desirable to you, from whose skill you hope for help and relief. When afflicted nature makes you prize instruments that may contribute any thing to ease you of your burdens and pains, which are but for a season, and can only end in a temporary death; how valuable then should Christ as a physician be to you, who can heal your spiritual diseases, which if not heal'd in time will bring you under

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der the darkness and torment of eternal death? will you not cry out and say; O thou glorious Sun of righteousness arise upon us with a light that may heal our diseases, and quicken our dead souls!

II. If it be a great blessing to have Christ as a Sun of righteousness to arise upon us, then we ought to enquire whether Christ as a Sun of righteousness has risen upon us. It may be said, how may we know whether Christ, as a Sun of righteousness, has risen upon us with healing in his wings? I answer; We may know this by three things.

I. Christ as a Sun of righteousness has risen upon us, when we have hearts to obey God. All the light of knowledge which is without a life of obedience, is but a light that yields to the power of darkness. God promises in the covenant of grace, to give his people a heart to know him. *Jer. xxiv. 7. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord.* The heart is the fountain of all obediential acts. When Christ enlightens our minds, he then enlivens our hearts for obedience: The light which Christ gives us does so influence the whole frame and constitu-

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tion of our souls, that we willingly give up our selves to obey and serve God. Obedience to God is made the *Tessera* of true knowledge, because it is the inseparable fruit of it: Our ignorance of Christ may be proved from our disobedience; but we may know that we know him, if we obey the commandments of God. 1 *Joh. ii. 3. 4.* *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* When we are disobedient, we are then without the light of Christ, but our obedience is a proof that Christ has risen us, and that we know him.

2. Christ as a Sun of righteousness has risen upon us, when we have humbling reflections because of our own sins, but are thankful for the sovereign mercy of God towards us. If we be discriminated from the dark world, it is Christ that has made us to differ, by arising upon us with the light of life. We were no better than they who are left to perish in their sins, when the healing wings of Christ were first stretched over us: We were blind when Christ enlightened us,
and

and we were dead when he quickened us: We must remember this, that all swelling thoughts may be curb'd in us, and that the glory of our salvation may be given to Christ as he is the healer of our diseases, and the author and finisher of our life,

3. Christ as a Sun of righteousness has risen upon us, when we have a greater regard to the essential and substantial parts of religion, than to the external and circumstantial parts of it. We must act from a conscience enlightened by the word of God in all the exterior parts of religion; but we must not have the same respect for things that are external and circumstantial, which we have for things fundamental and necessary. When we have as much zeal for things which are external and circumstantial in religion as we have for the things which are essential and necessary to the life of grace, we are then in darkness and never came under Christ's wings of light. *Charity thinketh no evil.* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Charity must not devise a charge or accusation, where there is no appearance of guilt, and no evidence of a crime; but what good can the

most comprehensive charity think of them whose zeal is burning ~~not~~ for ceremonies of man's invention, when they have not one spark of heavenly fire either for the greatest truths which God has revealed, or the most important duties which he has commanded? what favourable judgment can we frame of that man's pretended devotion, who furiously contends about the outward gesture which he must use in the Lord's supper, when yet he gives undeniable proofs by the immoralities of his life, that he has no care of the frame of his heart? what value can we have for the zeal of them who disturb their own peace and the quiet of others about the way of Baptism, and dispute with great heat, whether there must be much water or little water in the administration of the ordinance, and yet do not strive either to understand the spiritual significance of it, or to have the design of the ordinance answered in themselves, which is to experience the virtue of Christ's death, and the power of his resurrection?

When we lay more weight on the outward form of ordinances, then we do on
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the reference which they have to the spiritual gifts which we must receive from God in them, we then contradict the holy Ghost. *Gal. vi. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* When we are more zealous for the form of any ordinance, then we are for the power of the spirit of God in it, we than in contradiction to the holy Ghost say, that the new creature avails nothing without circumcision.

The higher the Sun in nature rises, the shorter the shadows grow. It is so in the rising of the Sun of grace: When the Sun of righteousness is risen upon us we shall be for the substance of Christianity, but no further for the shadows of it than the shadows refer to the substance. When we are all for shadows and not for substance, we are not then in the light and heat of Christ, but only in the light of our own fancies and in the heat of our own vain imaginations.

III. If it be from Christ, when he arises upon us as a Sun of righteousness; that we have all our light, life and all spiritual health; then it is he only that

can revive us when we are under decays and declensions. All light and life is in Christ originally, but it is in us only derivatively, or as it is derived from Christ to us: As it is Christ that quickens sinners when they are dead in sin, so it is he that gives believers a revival, when they are under deadness.

1. It is Christ that brings to their remembrance, from whence they are fallen. Back-sliding believers must remember from whence they are fallen, before they can repent and rise again. *Revel. ii. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.* If Christ did not by his Spirit bring to the remembrance of believers the sin of their backslidings, they would see no evil in themselves and so would never think of returning.

2. When Christ has laid them under the conviction of their backslidings, he then restores them. Christ invigorates backsliding believers when their love is abated, he blows up the fire of their zeal when it is almost quench'd, and he strengthens their grace when it has been weakened by their backward motion: he heals their backslidings, and then they re-
vive

vive as the corn. *Hof. xiv. 4, 7. I will heal their backslidings. They shall revive as the corn.* Christ heals their backslidings, and then they are as the corn which seem'd to be dead in a rigorous winter-season, but revives and grows up by the heat and warmth of the Sun in the spring time. When believers are frozen and stiff with the winter cold of great backslidings, Christ thaws and melts them, and then they regain their strength and liveliness.

IV. If it be from Christ when he arises upon us a Sun of righteousness, that we have all our light, life, and comfort, then we must get more under the wings of Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness: A good man as long as he is in this world, must always be getting nearer to the Sun.

The union which is between Christ and believers cannot be closer than it is, because it is immediate; but the communion which is between Christ and them in this life is only mediate and by ordinances, and because it is only mediate and by ordinances, when they have most communion with Christ they may still have more:

They cannot be more one with Christ mystically than they are; but they may have more communion with him in his ordinances than they have, and may get larger experiences of the operations of Christ's Spirit, as he is a Spirit to enlighten, quicken, and comfort them. If we be members of Christ, we must not only lie under his healing wings, but we must get more under them. We must do this for three ends. That our fruit may be sweet and ripe; that we may grow in grace; and that we may have more of the light of comfort.

1. We must get more under the wings of Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness, that our fruit may be sweet and ripe. The fruit which a believer, as a believer, brings forth unto God, is never wild fruit; because he has a new root of life as he is united to Christ; but his fruit may be sour: his fruit is sour, when he not only neglects his duty, or is careless in it, but when he is drawn to duty, more by the terrors of conscience than by the sense of God's love. When a believer has only the winter-light of the Sun of righteousness, his fruit is then sour and unripe; but when he

he feels more of the quickening influence of Christ's wings, his fruit then is sweet and ripe. The sin of a believer cannot overcome Christ's goodness; but Christ's love overcomes his sin, and takes away more and more of his crabbed and perverse temper.

2. We must get more under the wings of Christ as he is a Sun of righteousness, that our spiritual life may not only be preserved and maintained, but that we may grow in grace. That very Sun of righteousness which by his beams conveys a spiritual life to us at first, can only by his light and heat bring us to a taller growth. When Christ chafes away the clouds of our ignorance, he transmits to us a generative and fructifying principle, that we may not only live, but that we may grow in grace. It may be said, when is it that we have that growth in grace which is from Christ? I answer, when our growth is uniform, universal, and constant.

(I.) Our growth in grace must be uniform. It must be a growth wherein one grace has a consistency or harmony with another. When we have this uniform growth,

growth, then when we are in the exercise of one grace we shall not either neglect the exercise of any other grace, or act in opposition to it. As for instance, our care to promote sanctification will never be pleaded to weaken our faith in the righteousness of Christ as our only justifying righteousness; and then on the other hand, faith in the righteousness of Christ will not be urged to lessen our care to maintain good works, and to glorify God by the holiness of our lives.

(2.) It must be universal. The growth of a believer's grace, may be in this or that particular grace eminently, but not only, because it will be in every grace. When we grow strong in our faith, we shall not cast off the fear of God, but shall have a greater fear of him, when we have clearer conceptions of the grace of God towards us in Christ, we shall then press more after holiness of life: When we rise up to greater spirituality in acts of divine worship, we shall then with more tenderness and caution perform the duties of every relation.

(3.) It must be a constant growth. It is a growth that does never finally and totally cease, altho' it may for a time be interrupted.

interrupted. When the outward man of a believer perishes, his inward man is renew'd day by day. 2 Cor. iv. 16. *Tho' our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renew'd day by day.* The lower a believer's body sinks down towards the grave, the higher his soul rises up towards heaven: When he is most unfit to act in this world, he is then most meet to live in the immediate enjoyment of God. When our growth in grace is uniform, universal, and constant, we then prosper in the best things, and have the aspect of the Sun of righteousness in his summer influence.

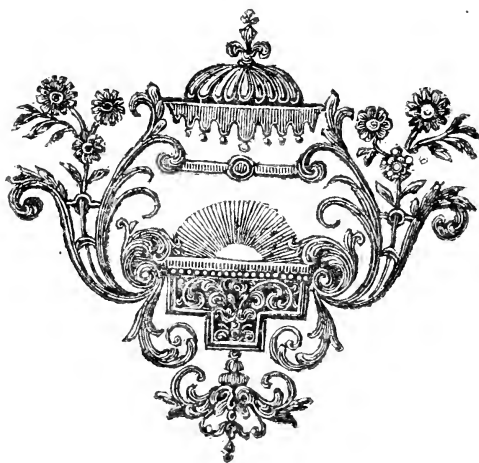
3. We must get more under the wings of Christ, that he may cast the beams of his comforting light more vigorously upon us. It is the favour of Christ that is our life, and it is the light of his favour that can put joy into our hearts: We must pray that we may not only have his face in favour set towards us, but that we may have the light of his countenance lifted up upon us to fill our hearts with gladness. *Psal. iv. 6, 7. Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* The
psalmist

Pſalmiſt prized a good look of God's face as that which brought more joy with it, then all the good things of this world.

Our inherent grace can yield us no comfort, but when Chriſt ſhines upon it. The grace of faith, love, hope, filial fear, humility, ſelf-denial, and obedience, are the heavenly ſtars which beautify the firmament of every renewed ſoul; but the aforeſaid graces, which are as ſtars in believers, borrow all their light from the Sun of righteouſneſs. The grace of a believer can afford him no light of comfort, unleſs Chriſt, who is the prince and fountain of all ſpiritual light, ſhine into his ſoul to render his graces viſible.

We muſt endeavour to liſt up our minds above all external objects; we muſt ſeparate our thoughts from the clogs of ſenſe and imagination as much as may be; we muſt fix the eyes of our underſtandings upon the Sun of righteouſneſs who is a glorious, infinite, and eternal Spirit; and when we do this with faith in the promiſes of God's word, with a love to the perſon of Chriſt, and with a reverential fear of his divine majeſty, we
ſhall

shall not then fail of seeing and hearing that which is most joyful and delightful. We shall see *Lumen in Lumine*, and shall hear that sweet voice that says, *My son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.*







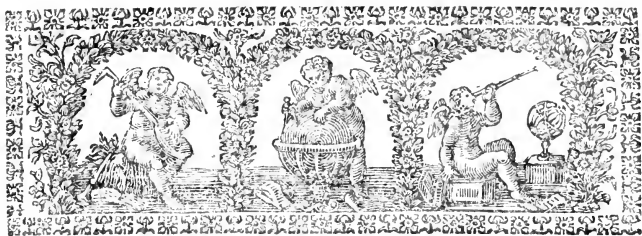
O F

LIFE and IMMORTALITY

Brought to LIGHT by

C H R I S T.





O F

LIFE *and* IMMORTALITY

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C H R I S T.



2 T I M. I. 10.

But now is made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Gospel.



L L the false religions which are in the world, either deceive a man with a vain hope, if he be addicted to security and presumption; or they throw him upon a rack, and fill him with endless perplexities,

plexities, and tormenting fears, if he be willing to see with his own eyes, and not be so credulous as to believe every idle dream, upon the confident report of others. When every false opinion either strengthens the followers of it in their carnal confidence, or leads them into a labyrinth of inextricable difficulties, and leaves them ignorant of eternal life, and the means of salvation; it is the gospel only, that brings us to know what true felicity is, how it is to be obtain'd, and where it is to be found. The gospel makes known to lost sinners the way of their recovery by Christ, and reveals to them, for their comfort and satisfaction, what their end shall be when they return to God.

The Apostle gives a just and deserved commendation of the Gospel, that *Timothy* might not be ashamed of it but encouraged to preach and defend it. In the ninth verse of this chapter he mentions the eternal purpose of God to save sinners thro' Christ; and in the tenth verse he shews how this purpose of God is not only fulfill'd, but made known to us.

There are three things in the words of
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the Text, which are highly worthy of our observation.

I. It is by the incarnation of Christ, that the way of salvation is fully and clearly reveal'd to us. The grace, which God not only intended for us, but gave to Christ for us before the world began, is now made manifest, by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ: It was hid from the generality of men, before Christ came in the flesh: It was reveal'd to *Adam* immediately after the fall, and some saving discoveries were made of it in every age to a few; but it was veil'd and covered from the greatest part of the world, till Christ assumed our nature, and they who had a saving revelation of it, saw it only as a bright light in the midst of many clouds. As soon as Christ came in the flesh, and was born of a woman, made under the law, the curtain was undrawn, the veil was rent, the clouds were scattered, the orient pearl was taken out of the cask, and the work of redemption was made manifest, without types and shadows, without figures, allegories, and dark representations.

II. Christ has abolish'd death, he has not only conquered death, but he has a-

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abolish'd it. A man's enemies may be conquered, and yet they may still live: Christ has not only brought death under, and trod it under his feet; but he has abolish'd or done it away. The participle καταργήσαντες, which is from the verb καταργέω, signifies that he has destroy'd it, made it to vanish or to cease. Christ has swallowed up death in victory, and when it is in it self the most terrible enemy, he has made it to be no enemy, but a friend to believers: Christ has destroyed death, by bearing our sins, or by doing for us what the law commands, and suffering for us what the law threatens as a punishment for sin. It may be said, how is death abolish'd or destroyed by Christ? I answer; Christ has abolish'd eternal death, and he has abolish'd temporal death.

1. Christ has abolish'd eternal death, and has freed believers for ever from it, as it is the greatest punishment. Sin which is the cause of eternal death is taken away by Christ, and when sin, as it is the cause of eternal death, is removed, then eternal death, which is the effect of sin, can never come upon believers: The second
death

death cannot hurt them. *Rev. ii. 11. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.* The second death is the destruction of both soul and body in hell for ever, and it is that which should be most feared by us, because it deprives men of all good, and brings them under the painful sense of all evil. To fear the death of the body, and not to fear the second death, which is the death of both soul and body, is to be like children who are afraid of a shadow, but not of the fire that burns them, nor of the water that drowns them: To fear to die, and not to fear to be damn'd, is as great folly, as when one runs from a spark, to leap into a furnace. *He that overcometh*, or he that not only makes a profession of the truth, but puts all his trust and confidence in Christ, engages in a warfare against his own corruptions, rejects the allurements of a vain world, and resists all the temptations of the devil, *shall not be hurt of the second death.* When the union between his soul and body is dissolved, he shall not come into condemnation: when his soul is separated from his body for a season, it shall

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never be separated from Christ, but shall be for ever with him.

2. Christ has abolish'd temporal death; or that death which parts our souls from our bodies. He has destroy'd the power of temporal or corporal death.

(1.) It cannot keep the bodies of believers always in the grave. When the dead bodies of believers are covered in the dust, they are then as seed sown that will spring up again. The bodies of believers, when they die, are sown in dishonour, but they shall be rais'd in glory: They are laid down in the earth vile bodies, but Christ will not only raise them up again, but when he raises them up again, he will make them like unto his own glorious body. *Phil. iii. 20, 21. We look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious body.*

(2.) Temporal or corporal death has no power to hurt the souls of believers, when they go out of their bodies. Christ has left nothing in corporal death to hurt believers, when it passes upon them. When unbelieving sinners die, their death is a fruit of the curse, and is followed with eternal death;

death; but Christ is the security of believers, against all the evil that is in death. Sin is death's sting, and it is a sting sharper than can be conceiv'd, and more painful than can be endured. 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* Sin, as it is a breach of the law of God, both arms death with a terrible sting, and gives it strength to thrust this sting into the souls of sinners. When we are under the guilt of our sins, and are not justified before God, we then stand with bare naked breasts before the sting of death, and the violated law has power to strike and pierce us with the sting, not only of temporal, but of eternal death. What defence is left for us against the sting of death? I answer; there is no defence for us against it but only in Christ, who has fulfill'd the law, and thereby has pluck'd out the sting of death. We may be convinced of the necessity of our dying, and that death is unavoidable, because all that have liv'd before us in this world are gone, and all that are now living with us in it are going; but the consideration of death as it must come upon all, will neither encourage us to die, nor

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comfort us under the fears of death. It is Christ only that can shield us against all the dangers of death, and that can arm us against the fears of it. When we believe that Christ not only died before us, but died in our stead, to fulfil that very law that we had transgress'd, and lay in the grave for us, we shall then have light in the darkness of death, and instead of being dismay'd at the approach of it, we shall triumph over it, and say with the apostle; *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* All the evil that is in death is taken away by Christ for a believer, and no more of death remains to him, than the separation of his soul from his body for a time, which proves the greatest good to both his soul and body, as it is preparatory for their everlasting union. When all sin is carried away by Christ, death is then left without a sting, and altho' believers come under it, yet it is so far from making them miserable, that as a *medium*, and in a way of subserviency, it conduces to the perfecting of their happiness: The
death

death of believers is their rest from all labour, their entrance into everlasting life, and it is a putting off the rags of their mortality, that they may put on the robes of glory.

III. Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He merited life for us by his death, and he brings it forth to the light, by the gospel: He purchased life for us, and then he reveal'd it by the gospel: He has not only brought life to light, but a life that is immortal. Life is good, but when it is liable to the invading power of death, it is then embittered: if life be good, how good and sweet must that life of immortality be, which Christ has brought to light?

It is from the latter part of the verse that I shall raise this doctrine or observation,

It is by Christ that life and immortality is brought to light.

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In speaking to this Doctrine, I shall do four things.

I. I shall prove, that it is Christ, that brings life and immortality to light.

II. I shall shew, in what respect Christ is said to bring life and immortality to light.

III. I shall shew, how it is that Christ brings life and immortality to light.

IV. I shall apply the truth.



C H A P.



CHAP. I.

The Proof of the Doctrinal Truth.

I Shall prove that it is Christ that brings life and immortality to light. This may be proved from the titles which are given to Christ in the Scriptures.

I. Christ is the light of the Gentiles. *Isa. xlix. 6. It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may'st be my salvation to the end of the earth.* It is the first person in the Trinity, that is brought in here speaking thus to the second person, as he came under a stipulation to be the surety and Saviour of sinners. It is as if God the Father had said

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said thus; The dignity of thy person, as thou art my only begotten son, and the office of mediator whereunto I have called thee, deserve and require something more than the restoring of *Israel*; because the limits of *Israel* are too narrow, and the gain of *Israel* is too small a reward for thy sufferings: Thou shalt not take flesh to sweat, labour, and die, for the nation of the *Jews* only; but thou shalt be a light unto the *Gentiles*, and shalt bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

II. Christ is the light of the world. *Joh. viii. 12.* *I am* (saith Christ) *the light of the world.* There is no true light of knowledge in the world, but only that which is from Christ: he is the only light that shines upon the benighted world, and by his own splendour, disperses and drives away the moral darkness of it.

III. Christ is the day star. *2 Pet. i. 19.* *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.* The day-star is that star, which for some time of the year rises a little before the
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the Sun. Christ is called the day-star for two reasons.

1. As the day star rises not, till the end of the night and towards the morning; so Christ came not, till the last ages of the world.

2. As a day-star, when it rises, shines brighter than all the other stars; so when Christ came, he shined forth with a light, that was clearer than the light of prophecy, which was under the law, and he gave believers a more distinct and satisfying view of eternal life: The prophetic light under the law, was but as the light of a candle in a dark place, compared to the light of Christ under the gospel-dispensation.

Christ is not only the day-star, but the bright morning star. *Rev. xxii. 26. I am the root and off-spring of David, and the bright and morning star.* As he is the day-star, because he lets into the souls of men the day break, or the dawning light of the glory of heaven; so he is the bright morning star, because he recovers sinners out of that night of darkness wherein they had lost themselves.

When

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When a man has lost his way in a dark night, and has wandered about till he has wearied himself, he is overjoy'd when the day star arises, because it is a forerunner of the morning light, which will shew him where his way is, and how he may find it: The appearance of the morning star is not so joyful to a man, that has lost his way, and despairs of finding it, as Christ is beneficial and comfortable to sinners that are sensible of their own blindness, because he brings them out of their dark miserable state, and guides them into the way of life and peace.

IV. Christ is a Sun *Psal. lxxxiv. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory.* Christ is not only a Sun, but he is a Sun of righteousness. *Mal. iv. 2.* Christ will be a fire to consume the wicked, and a sword to kill them; but he is a Sun and a shield to them that trust in him: he is their shield for defence, and he is their Sun to give them light and life.

1. He is their shield for defence. It is by the mighty power and irresistible strength of his out-stretched arm, that he defends them from the world's rage, covers them

them

them from the fiery darts of Satan, and secures them from the armies of hell.

2. He is their Sun to give them light and life. He dispels the darkness of their sins, brings them out of the windings and recesses of error, and comforts them with the shining light of unquestionable truth.

V. Christ is the day spring or the East. When *Zacharias* offered up a solemn eucharistick sacrifice, or oblation of thanks to God for the birth of *John Baptist*, he gave a fit name to Christ. *Luke* i. 78. *The day spring from on high has visited us.* Ἀνατολὴ ἡ ἡμέρας, the East, or that which rises in the East, has visited us. The evangelist *Luke* may be thought to refer to the words of the Prophet *Zachary*. chap. vi. ver. 12. *The man whose name is the branch.* תְּזַמַּח *Tzemach*, (which we translate the *Branch*;) signifies either the *Branch*, or the *East*.

A grand stickler for ceremonies assigns a reason why Christ is called the East, which is this; The special presence of God (saith he) ever was, and is in that part of the heaven of heavens, which answereth to the equinoctial of the holy land. (*John Gregorys* remains. pag. 71.) The drift of this presumptuous chimerical assertion,

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fertion, was to promote bowing to the East, and consequently to put a good gloss on altar-worship, and therein to gratify the humour of the *Laudensian* faction, which, in the last century, threatened this nation with a flood of Popish superstition.

The author and deviser of this fanciful opinion, was considerable for parts and learning; but we may see in this one instance, how men of fleshly, selfish, and designing spirits, will wrest the holy Scriptures to serve a turn, and will abuse the sacred authority of God's word to bring credit to their own foolish inventions.

A good improvement may be made of Christ's being called the East. It may be said, why is he called the East? I answer; because it is through him only that the light of salvation shines on sinners. Astronomers make the East to be the place of light, because the light of the Sun first appears there to us, and shews it self, in the rose blush of the morning. As it is from the East, that light first comes to us, so it is from Christ and from him only, that the light of life breaks out upon us: it is he that enlightens the clouded minds of misled and bewildered sinners, when they are shut

shut up in the obscurity of ignorance and unbelief: When it is night with them, and would be so for ever, if they were left in their darkness, Christ then shines upon them with his morning light. As the world would be most uncomfortable, and no other than one entire universal blank, wherein nothing pleasant and delightful could be seen, if it were always without the day-break and the rising Sun; so sinners are in a most doleful miserable state, while they are without Christ as a Sun in the East, to visit and to give them light in their darkness. When sinners are in darkness, they either run on headlong to their own destruction, without any sense of their danger; or they are distracted with fears, surrounded with terrors, swallowed up in despair, and rid to death by the frightful hag of their own restless fancy. It is Christ that believers have for their only hope of glory. *Col. i. 27. Christ in you the hope of glory.* When Christ is in us by his Spirit, and when we apprehend him by faith, it is then in him, and by him, that we have the hope of eternal glory: he is the great object of our hope, because there is in him not only

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all the good that we can hope for, but all the good that ever we can enjoy : It is in Christ that we have the hope of a glorious life; but out of Christ and from Christ, there is nothing but darkness, and such a darkness, as is the blemish of all beauty, the fountain of deformity, the bane of all joy and comfort, the spring of fear, and the seat of eternal death.



C H A P. II.

*In what respect it is, that
Christ brings life and im-
mortality to light.*

I Shall shew in what respect it is,
that Christ brings life and immorta-
lity to light.

I. He

I. He brought life to light when it was buried and lay hid under the darknes of sin and the curse of the law.

II. He has reveal'd the secrets of God's heart to us about our salvation.

III. He has brought not only life, but a more excellent life to light, than ever innocent *Adam* had.

I. Christ brought life to light, when it was buried and lay hid under the darknes of sin and the curse of the law. As eternal life for sinners could never have been obtain'd, if Christ had not procur'd it; so it could never have been known if he had not brought it to light. When sin entred into the world, it reigned unto death, and left fallen man without any hope of life; if he had continued under sin as it reigned unto death, he could no more have had any light of life, than the devils now have, because sin, as it brought him under the curse of the law, shut out all the light of life from him: As he was under the curse of the law for sin, he could expect nothing but death as the reward of sin: When he was under the reign of sin, he could have nothing but the scaring vision of eternal death before

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his eyes, till the reign of grace destroy'd the reign of sin, and threw down the monarchy of death, which sin raised up. *Rom. v. 20, 21. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ.* When grace mounted the throne, wrested the sceptre out of sin's hand, put a final stop to its reign, and brought eternal life for sinners to light by Christ, then fallen man, who before was compassed about with darkness, and terrified with the views of death, could see the light of life.

II. Christ has reveal'd the secrets of God's heart to us about our salvation. He has published the gracious intentions of God's heart, and has inform'd us of that love which was in God, and moved towards us from eternity. *Job. i. 18. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.* We may note two things in the words.

I. That which is deny'd. *No man has seen God at any time.* *ἐθεὶς*, none, or no mere creature has seen God at any time. No man ever had any spiritual intellectual vision

vision of God since the fall, but by the revelations which Christ has made of him.

2. That which is affirm'd. It is Christ's peculiar prerogative to give fallen creatures a sight of God. *The on'y begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.* None but Christ, who is God's only begotten Son, partakes of his delights, and lies in his bosom, or knows all his secrets, can make known God to us.

(1.) He declares or reveals God to us in the glory of his divine nature and infinite perfections, that we may adore, admire, love, and honour him. The revelation which we have of God in Christ, is far beyond the discoveries which we have of him, either in the works of creation, or in the law.

(2.) He declares him in the counsels of his peace, and in the riches of his grace and mercy, that we may trust in him. Christ makes known to us the compassionate breathings of God's bowels, and shews us that life, which before the world began, was lock'd up in the cabinet of God's secret purposes and eternal decrees. It is in Christ that we see the model of God's

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thoughts, the method of his counfels, the contrivance of his wisdom about man's recovery, and the affectionate motions of his goodnefs descending to us in our misery, and raising us up to a crown of glory.

III. Chrift has brought not only life, but a more excellent life to light, than ever innocent *Adam* had. Believers have in Chrift not only a clearer revelation of life, than *Adam* had ; but they have a better life reveal'd and promis'd to them. If *Adam* had flood, he fhould ever have lived, and he would never have died ; if he had not firft fallen into fin, he could not have fallen under death, either in foul or body ; if he had not turned from God, he would not have been turned out of his happy ftate ; his life was to laft as long as his obedience ; if his obedience had been perpetual, his life would have been fo. *Adam* knew God to be his chiefeft good and that he would be his God for ever if he did obey him. Innocent *Adam's* ftate was a blessed ftate : but if he had never fallen, he could not have expected more than the happinefs of a paradifical ftate here on earth. To fpeak how he would have been tranflated and carried to heaven, after

after he had stood a certain number of years, is that which we may imagine; but we are so far from having any Scripture proofs of the truth of it, that we have ground and reason, from the Scriptures, to believe the contrary.

1. *Adam's* immortality would have consisted with eating and drinking, labour and rest, which are things that fall short of the life of heaven: He would have had a lower degree of immortality, than believers may hope for through Christ.

2. To ascend to heaven is appropriated to Christ as that which belongs to him. *Joh. iii. 13.* *No man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven.* It is the man Christ only that ascended to heaven, in his own right; but all others that ascended before or after his incarnation, ascended in the virtue and strength of his merit.

3. Christ in opposition to the first *Adam* is called the Lord from heaven. *1 Cor. xv. 47.* *The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.* The first *Adam*, as a common head, was of the earth earthy, and as he was of the earth

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earthly, he had no title to any higher station for himself and for all that sprung from him, than a terrestrial paradise; but Christ as he is the second *Adam* is the Lord from heaven, and gives to all that are under him as a common head, a right to enter into heaven: As he is a quickening spirit he gives them a fitness for heaven, and as he is the Lord from heaven he gives them a right to possess and enjoy it.

4. The first *Adam's* earthly paradise was a type of the heavenly paradise above, and without the second *Adam* there can be no entrance into the second paradise. It is not remote from truth to say, that Christ might intend this, in the discourse which had with the confident and self-applauding young man, who ask'd him, what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life. *Math. xix. 17. 21. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.* It may be observed that Christ here puts a difference, between entering into life by keeping the commandments, and having treasure in heaven, which comes to them that follow him. It is as if
Christ

Christ had said ; If thou canst perfectly obey the commandments of God, or perform all the conditions of the covenant of works, thou shalt have life ; but if thou wilt have treasure in heaven thou must then follow me, because it is by me only that thou canst enter into heaven. Christ's words may bear this sense, altho' his immediate and principal design in speaking them, was to discover the ignorance, pride, and hypocrisy of the young man.

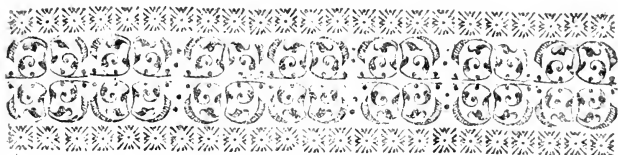
There is one objection which I shall answer, that may be made against what has been said, it is this ; If eternal death in hell be the recompence of disobedience, then it will follow, that eternal life in heaven, would have been the reward of *Adam's* obedience if he had stood. I answer ; this does not follow, because there is not the same proportion between the obedience of the creature and the disobedience of the creature : The obedience of the creature, altho' it be consonant to right reason, can deserve nothing in it self, because it is every way due to God ; but sin is a prevarication from the rule of justice, a violence offered to right reason, a contradiction to the will of God, and in its own nature deserves

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the evil of punishment. Where the apostle speaks of eternal death, and of eternal life, the one is said to be the reward of sin, but the other is said to be the gift of God. *Rom. 6. 23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our lord.* The obedience of *Adam* could merit only by virtue of God's promise, and not because of the intrinsic worth of it; but the scriptures say nothing of any promise of heaven made to *Adam* because of his obedience. The life and immortality which Christ has brought to light, transcends the life and immortality of innocent *Adam*: Christ has not only restored what *Adam* lost, but he has merited for us a better life than ever *Adam* had in his state of innocence.



CHAP.



CHAPTER III.

*How it is that Christ brings
life and immortality to
light.*

I Shall shew how it is that Christ brings life and immortality to light.

I. He does it by the gospel, and the ordinances of it, as the outward means.

II. He does it by the Spirit, as the inward efficient cause.

I. Christ brings life and immortality to light by the gospel, and the ordinances of it, as the outward means. It is by the gospel-revelation of Christ, that we come to know, that there is life for sinners in him: The gospel is a bright paraphrase on Christ's person, offices, and mediatory transactions.

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transactions. By the gospel we must understand, the pure declarations of God's undeserved mercy, and the promises which he has made of eternal life as a free gift to sinners through Christ: The gospel is a revelation of God's free sovereign grace to sinners. This is the gospel, and it has been published from the beginning: There was a revelation of the gospel made to *Adam* after the fall; there was a fuller revelation of it under the Levitical dispensation, and a compleat revelation was made of it by Christ and his apostles.

1. There was a revelation of the gospel made to *Adam* after the fall, in the promise of the seed of the woman. *Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The *Messias* was here promised, to deliver fallen sinners by destroying the devils power, and the way of his effecting the redemption of sinners is here intimated.

(1.) Christ was promised, to deliver fallen sinners, by destroying the devils power. *It shall bruise thy head.* The serpents head, is the devils policy to project all mischief,
mischiefs,

mischief, and his power to bring his malicious designs into execution, in the destruction of sinners: Christ as the promised seed destroys both the devils policy and power, because he defeats all the devils crafty designs, and he disarms him of his power.

(2.) Christ was promised to destroy the devils policy and power, by his sufferings. *Thou shalt bruise his heel.* The bruising of Christ's heel, broke the devils head: The heel of Christ was to be bruised, or his blood, as a redeemer, was to be shed, to bring fallen man out of that gulph of misery, into which sin had cast him. In the bruising of Christ's heel, not only the death but the resurrection of Christ, was signified and covertly express'd; it was not his head but his heel, that was to be bruised; he was promised as one that must die to satisfy for sin, but he was to rise again, and not to remain under the power of death: When his heel was bruised, his head was not touch'd.

The first gospel that was preach'd was comprehended in a narrow circuit, and yet there was in it not only the promise of a redeemer to sinners, but the revelation
of

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of the way of their redemption, by the death of the promised redeemer.

Upon the promise of a redeemer made to *Adam*, followed the institution of bloody sacrifices, which served as a commentary on the first promise of Christ; that when the antediluvian believers had the promise of a Saviour, as food for their souls, they might also have the *modus* of their redemption, by his death, sacramentally represented to them. The offering of bloody sacrifices to God, could not be from the light of nature, because reason without revelation could never dictate to men, that the blood of unreasonable creatures could pacify God when he was offended for sin. The institution of bloody sacrifices could not be from the light of nature, but it was taught *Adam* by revelation from God, and he from God taught it his posterity; that they might know that without the shedding of blood, and the blood of the promised redeemer, there could be no remission of sin.

2. Under the Levitical ministrations, there was a further revelation made of the gospel. Believers, under the Levitical dispensation, had not only many promises of Christ added

added to the promises which had been made of him before, but, in the legal ceremonies and service, they had a typical gospel. Christ was reveal'd to them in types, as their life and salvation. The ark of the testament was a representation of Christ, as he is the eternal word of the Father, and the only revealer of the secrets of God's heart: The ark, as it was placed in the tabernacle, was a shadow of the incarnation of Christ, or of his being cloathed with our flesh: He was prefigured by the table of shew-bread, as he is the food of our souls, and the preserver and maintainer of our spiritual life: He was exhibited or set forth by the candlestick, as our spiritual light: The sacrifices pointed to his death: The altar was a symbol of the efficacy of his mediation: The incense represented him in the sweet favour of his merits, and in the power of his intercession.

3. A compleat revelation was made of the gospel by Christ and his apostles. By the preaching of Christ and his apostles, the gospel in all the glory of it was reveal'd. We must not think that every thing which Christ and his apostles spoke
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or preach'd was gospel, because they preach'd the law as well as the gospel; but by the coming of Christ in the flesh, by his sufferings and death, and by the preaching of the apostles, the gospel as it is a revelation of life to sinners, was brought to perfection in its publication.

If it be through the gospel, that life and immortality is brought to light, and if the revelation of life belongs only to the gospel, as the external organ which Christ has chosen for it, then, it is not to be conceived how much they dishonour Christ, and injure the souls of men, who so mix the law and gospel together, that none can know what they make to be law, and what to be gospel. To mix and mingle the law with the gospel, is to confound things that are distinct and different, and by confounding them to lose both. The law admits of no abatements, by way of composition, with broken bankrupt sinners. If we detract from the perfection of the law, where then is the glory of it? If the law could give way to the acceptation of man's imperfect obedience, as his justifying righteousness before God, how then would it be a strict inflexible rule of eternal righteousness,

righteousness, and a genuine transcript of the infinite holiness of God? God is not like a despairing creditor, who makes the best bargain he can to save something and to get a little, where he can never expect the whole debt; but, as he is a righteous God, he insists upon all the demands of the law, and will recede from none of them. As the law will admit of no abatements, so the gospel will allow of no mixtures with the law: if it be metamorphosed into a law, it is no more a gospel of grace.

When the law is mingled with the gospel, or when works are joined with grace, in the justification of a sinner, the gospel by this alteration becomes another gospel than that which God has reveal'd, and they who presume to preach this mingled gospel are accursed. *Gal. i. 8.* *Tho' we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preach'd, let him be accursed.* The law is to be preach'd, and the consideration of it is to be frequently press'd on sinners as that which convinces them of sin, and shews them their misery; but the law is with all possible caution to be distinguished

from the gospel, and not mingled with it. It is by the law, when the spirit works by it, that we come under the smarting pain of a guilty conscience; but it is in the gospel only, that we find a sovereign cure for the mortal diseases of our souls. *By the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. iii. 20.* As we are sinners, we can only have a sight of death by the law. *2 Cor. iii. 6. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* The law kills sinners, as it leaves them under the severity of justice; but in the gospel eternal life is reveal'd to us, as that which is freely given to sinners through Christ. To mingle the law with the gospel, cannot be done without the greatest hazard and prejudice to the souls of sinners, because it is to hide from them that life, which Christ has brought to light.

II. Christ brings life and immortality to light by the spirit, as the spirit is the inward and efficient cause of conveying the light of life to us. There is a perfect revelation of life in the gospel; but the enlightening power of the spirit must be added to this revelation, before we can have a sight of the life which is reveal'd.

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lievers; so it is by the power of the spirit, that the promises of life are brought down to the hearts of believers, as they are exceeding great and precious promises, that they may experience the sweetness of God's love in them.

3. The spirit shines into us with a light, that is not only manifestative, or a light to make known life to us, but a transforming light, to change us into the likeness of the things which he reveals to us. The light of the Sun manifests things to us as they are; but the light of the spirit not only brings us to see things which we saw not before, but imprints their image on us. 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.*

If the spirit be the inward and only efficient cause of conveying the light of life to us, or the knowledge of salvation by Christ, which is, according to the revelation of the gospel, then it may be ask'd, how the spirit does this. I answer; the spirit does this by way of argumentation; and he does it by a sudden irradiation.

(1.) He

(1.) He does it by way of argumentation, or spiritual reasoning. This is when the spirit teaches a man to argue, as it were syllogistically, according to the rules of logick, or to draw certain conclusion, from scripture-promises which are infallibly true. When a believer is enabled to reason, or argue thus by the spirit, he then knows spiritual truths in the light of a demonstrative evidence: He has that to arm him against all invading fears and staggering doubts, which is the demonstration of the spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 4. *My speech and my preaching (saith the apostle) was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.* The evidence of truth that was in the apostles preaching, was not only in the demonstration of the spirit but in the demonstration of the spirit that was powerful, and so powerful as to throw down the mountains of doubts and unbelieving fears. What is this demonstration of the spirit, which is powerful as well as spiritual? I answer; it is when the spirit convinces the judgment of a believer, by the word, with reasons proper to evidence the truth

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and goodness of what he proposes, and that with pregnant and prevailing testimonies and demonstrations, which produce a full assent to the truth of that which is proposed, and give a competent satisfaction in the goodness of the things which are revealed : This is the demonstration of the spirit, and it works in believers that which is *the full assurance of faith*. Heb. x. 22. When believers have eternal life reveal'd to them, in such a clear light of the spirit, as is no less than demonstration, they can then say, eternal life is manifested unto us, we see it, and rejoice in the prospect of it. The demonstration of the spirit is a way of arguing, in comparison of which every other way of argumentation, is but elaborate folly : It is the logick of heaven wherein none are artists, but they only who are taught by the spirit : Every one that would learn to reason or argue spiritually, must have the spirit for his tutor. The spirit not only elevates and enlarges a believer's conceptions about Christ, but directs him how to collect and bring together the great things which are affirmed of Christ in the scriptures, and then to deduct from them,

them, as they are undoubted and general truths, some particular inferences and conclusions, which may be either for his confirmation or his comfort. As for instance; when one reasons thus, Christ has all power in heaven and earth given and committed to him, as he is a mediator between God and fall'n man, he is faithful in his promises, he is boundless in his mercy, he is infinite in his merit, he is tender in his compassions, he takes pleasure in the salvation of sinners, and will let none perish that trust in him; therefore, it is most safe for me to rely on him, as one that will be a sufficient Saviour for me, and will bring me to eternal life. This is the argumentation of a sanctified reason, as it is guided by the spirit, for the strengthening of faith.

(2.) The spirit conveys the light or knowledge of eternal life to us, by a sudden irradiation: He does it in a short way, and without a long train of arguments and reasonings. This is when the spirit takes some full and choice promise out of the word of God, and shines upon it with such a clear light, that a believer sees at once, much of the glory of that heavenly life,

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which is given to him in Christ. When the spirit enlightens a believer, by a sudden irradiation, he then beholds Christ with great clearness, and becomes a considerable proficient in the knowledge of eternal life, and the things of heaven, in a little time.

To say that the spirit sometimes brings a believer, by a light that suddenly shines into his mind, to know God and the things of God with great clearness, is not to broach a new or enthusiastic notion, but to affirm that which is a very old experienced scripture truth. *Job. xlii. 5, 6. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* There was when *Job* spoke this some manifestation of God made to his senses, yet it is not the sensitive but the intellectual eye, or the eye of his understanding that is here meant, and so *Maimonides* a learned *Jew* carries it: When *Job* reply'd to God in the *40th Chap.* altho' his eyes and ears had seen and heard strange and wonderful things, yet he did not there mention this sight, therefore it was not a sight of God by the eye of sense, but by
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the eye of his mind or by the spirit suddenly shining into his understanding, that he here speaks of. It is no exotic term in scripture, for clear knowledge to be called sight : We may be said to see what we hear of God, when we have a fiducial and comforting knowledge of him. There are two things that we may observe in *Job's* words.

[1.] When *Job* was not without a true knowledge of God, he does here speak of his arrival to a clearer and higher knowledge of him : He had a testimony from God himself concerning his integrity, and his discourses prove him to be no stranger to the operations of grace in his soul : He did here make a comparison between the lesser and higher degrees of the same thing. It is as if he had said ; I have been instructed about thy power, mercy, and providence from my youth, but what I knew of thee before, was but little to this strong impresson which thou hast now made of thy self upon my soul, and therefore I do now more throughly understand, what I ought to believe concerning thee and thy works. When *Job* says, *mine eye hath seen thee*, he means, that the knowledge

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ledge which he had now got of God, was more distinct and clear than that which he had formerly of him. That which is seen is more certain than that which is heard, and one eye witness is better than ten ear witnesses. It is good to hear of Christ in the word, but it is better to see him in it.

[2.] When *Job* had got a clearer knowledge of God, it wrought in him great humility and self-abhorrence. *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* He was not to begin his repentance now, as if he had not repented before, but he renew'd his repentance, and upon his getting a clearer sight of God, became viler in his own eyes. At the same time that a believer grows upwards, he grows downwards: When he rises higher in his knowledge of God, he then falls lower in the esteem of himself. When we are self-admirers and not self-abhorrrers, it is because we are ignorant both of God and of our selves: Ignorance makes us bold and confident beyond all bounds; but when we know God, we are then ashamed of our own imperfections, and
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the clearer sight we get of his glory, the more we abhor our selves because of our sinful deformity.



C H A P. IV.

The Application of the Doctrinal Truth.

I Shall apply the doctrinal truth in three things.

I. If it be Christ that brings life and immortality to light, then all sinners that are without the knowledge of Christ are in a woful and deplorable state: They are guilty of the greatest folly, but have no true wisdom; they know not how to go right but they will go wrong; they can have no hope; and they can have no comfort.

i. All sinners, that are without the knowledge of Christ, are guilty of the greatest folly, but have no true wisdom.

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The apostle *Paul* determin'd to know nothing among the *Corinthians*, but Christ in his crucifixion as well as in the glory of his Godhead. 1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* If it was the highest wisdom in the apostle (as undoubtedly it was) to reckon the mystery of a crucified Christ, to be that which deserved his diligent enquiries more than all other things; What folly then must it be for sinners to live without the knowledge of Christ, and to choose to know any thing rather than eternal life through him?

Men spend years in learning a trade, which only brings a subsistence for this life, that lasts but a few moments, and they will lay out many hours to prove doubtful and unprofitable conclusions, and yet will allow themselves no time to learn the knowledge of Christ: As this is inexcusable vanity and folly, so it will bring great vexation. We may excell in painting and limning, and yet draw the picture of our own ruin, if we do not represent to our selves Christ in his excellencies, so as to have our affections set
upon

upon him, as the chiefest of ten thousand. We may be subtile and artificial disputers, and yet be infected with the most pestilent and damnable Heresies, if we do not reason and argue our selves out of the snares of the devil, and into a firm belief of Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of sinners. We think our selves able to resolve the most knotty and abtruse questions, and yet be madmen, if we know not how to keep our selves from the defilements of sin, and how to go to God the Father through the mediation of Jesus Christ his Son. We may be able to rectify the errors and incongruities of speech, and yet be meer fools, if we be not taught and instructed out of God's word, to correct the errors of our hearts and lives. We may study the stars and pretend to know much of their motions, and yet be justly stigmatized for inadvertent heedless brutes, if we do not long to have Christ as the day-star to arise in our hearts. We may speculate things above sense and reason, and yet be not only very indiscreet, but chargeable with condensed blockishness, if we do not contemplate and admire the infinite glory of Christ, and make him to
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be the highest object of our delight. We may be expert in geometry and may know the proportions of bodies, and yet all our skill will prove to be but confusion, if we know nothing of the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ. All our knowledge will not profit us, if we be ignorant of Christ.

2. All sinners that are without the knowledge of Christ, know not how to go right but they will go wrong. As the grace of Christ is only sufficient to strengthen us in our weakneſs, ſo the light of Christ is only ſufficient to ſcatter the miſts of our ignorance, and to direct us to walk in the way of life. When we walk in our own light we ſhall increaſe our darkneſs, and when we are wiſe in our own eyes, and take upon us to be our own guides, we ſhall wander: He that follows the conduct of his own clouded reaſon, has a fool for his ſchool-maſter, and therefore no man ought to lean to his own underſtanding. *Prov. iii. 5. Learn not to thy own underſtanding.* Why ought not a man to lean to his own underſtanding? I anſwer; *because his underſtanding is darkened. Eph. iv. 18.* If the under-
ſtanding

standing of every man in his fallen state be darkened, then he cannot take one right step, so long as he is guided by his darkened understanding. *Math. vi. 23. If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee, be darkness, how great is that darkness!* It is even with the soul, as it is with the body: As the body cannot move aright but may every moment fall into the water or fire, when the bodily eye is put out thro' a defluxion of humours or some other hurtful accident; so when the eye of a man's soul, which is his understanding, is darkened, he can make no approach towards the centre of blessedness, but must fall headlong into hell. Christ presses the consideration of the extreme misery of them, who carry about with them dark minds. *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* When Christ spoke of that which was too big for words to utter, he shuts it up with a question. *How great is that darkness!* It is a darkness to be dreaded and fear'd, but it cannot be express'd.

3. All sinners that are without the knowledge of Christ, can have no hope.
They

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They can have to hope because they are without Christ. *Eph. ii. 12. Without Christ, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope.* All good comes to sinners out of the promises of the covenant of grace, but when sinners are without Christ they are then strangers to the promises of God. It is by the fulfilling of the promises of the covenant of grace, that elect sinners are united to Christ, and have their state changed: The promises reach them, before they have any faith to come to the promises, because it is by the accomplishment of the promises, that faith and every other grace is wrought in them; but when sinners are without Christ, they cannot expect the blessings which God has promised: They are strangers to the promises of the covenant of grace, because they are without Christ, and because they are strangers to the promises, they are without hope. The hope which sinners who are without Christ have, is but presumption, and they may be full of this hope, when they are nearest to destruction: Their quiet is a presage of their sudden ruin. We may apply to sinners, who are without Christ, that which was said of the *Babylonish* empire,

empire, when it was come very near its downfall. *Zech. i. 11. All the earth sitteth still, and is quiet.* When the Babylonish empire was to be thrown down, the people of it had no fear, but thought their state to be most safe and sure: They sat still and were quiet. When sinners, are filling up the measure of their sins, they may be full of peace. The false hope of a sinner may last as long as his life; but when he dies, his hope then expires with his life. *Prov. xi. 7. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: And the hope of unjust men perisheth.* Sinners may have a vain hope while they live, but when they die they must go down into the pit of despair: they may leave the world as lambs, but they must fall among dragons. They shall have despair for ever, but no hope.

4. All sinners, that are without the knowledge of Christ, can have no comfort: As they are hopeless, so they are comfortless. If we will have comfort, we must then necessarily have a spiritual intercourse with God through Christ: The best and chiefest comforts are not only in God, but there is no true comfort to be had

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without him : We may be our own troublers, but God only can be our comforter. When sinners are without the knowledge of Christ, they are then without the light of God's favour, and to be without the light of God's favour, will be the worst part of their everlasting misery in hell. The heat of the fire of God's wrath will not so much torment them in hell, as the loss of the light of his glorious face will trouble them : In hell sinners shall have nothing but darkness, and the least beam of light from God shall never shine upon them. Heaven is above all fear and full of joy, because there God shines forth in a glorious light, that will never be overclouded with darkness : In heaven there is a day without the approach of night ; but hell is overspread with darkness, or it is a night of darkness, without the return of light : This will fill it with eternal horreur and torment.

II. If it be Christ that brings life and immortality to light, then let every one of us get a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and of that life which he brings to light.

It may be said, what must we do, that we may get a spiritual knowledge of Christ,
and

and of life by him? I answer; we must do two things.

1. We must seek for the knowledge of Christ and of life by him, in the word and ordinances. When we do this, we must neither neglect ordinances, nor seek to have our carnal fancies gratified.

(1.) We must not neglect ordinances, but attend on God in them. When sinners neglect ordinances, they are then not only under a spiritual death, but there is no probability of their getting from under it. There is no such connexion between ordinances and spiritual life, as if all that came to them were made alive, because God gives life sovereignly; but when sinners will not come under ordinances, we cannot then hope that ever they shall be made alive.

(2.) When we come to ordinances, we must not desire to have our carnal fancies gratified, but we must have a regard to that in ordinances, which may be food for our faith. We must not think meanly of the ordinances of the gospel, because they do not suit our natural inclinations, which are altogether for external pomp, grandeur, and bravery; but we must come

to ordinances, as they are instituted by God, in a way of instrumentality, either to work faith in us, if we be in a state of unbelief, or to strengthen faith, if it be already wrought in us. The brazen serpent in the wilderness, had a natural aptitude to kill, but not to cure the stung *Israelites*, when they look'd upon it. It is known to them who are skill'd in physical secrets, that to look upon copper or brass, is so far from having a tendency to heal a wound that it may inflame it; but if any of the wounded *Israelites* had given way to their reason, to argue at this rate against the brazen serpent, which was appointed of God for their healing, the poison in their bodies would have given death a speedy conquest over them. We must neither neglect nor slight ordinances, but we must seek Christ in them, who can give us life, that we may not die in our ignorance and unbelief.

2. We must pray for the spirit of God, that he may reveal Christ, and the life which he has brought to light, internally to us. The spirit reveals no new doctrines to us, but internally enlightens our minds to know, and powerfully perswades
our

our hearts to believe, what Christ has reveal'd externally in his word. The spirit clears up to us the truths which Christ both taught and confirmed by his death: The spirit glorifies Christ, as he manifests to us the fulness of grace which he has purchased for us, and as he gives us a close near and operative view of that life which he has brought to light. *Joh. xvi. 14. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* The spirit shews us the truths of Christ to enlighten us, his righteousness to justify us, his comeliness to beautify us, his comforts to refresh us, and that life which he has procured for us to make us happy for ever. We must pray for the spirit, because the spirit only can give us a sight of the land of uprightness, and can lead us into it. *Psal. cxliii. 10. Thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.* There is a land of uprightness, where there are wells of living water, that we have not digg'd, houses which never want repair, that we have not built, vineyards to afford us new wine in the strength and excellence of it, that we have not dress'd, trees to yield us plenty and variety of delightful fruits,

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that

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that we have not planted, and unsearchable treasures to enrich us, that we have not gathered together : This is a desirable and a pleasant land, and we can now do little more than speak of it under the shadow and resemblance of sensible things. How shall we get into this most desirable and pleasant land? I answer ; it is the good spirit of God that must lead us into it. There is a land of uprightness, or a blessed immortality brought to light by Christ, but it is the spirit that must bring us to know it, and must carry us to it.

III. If Christ has brought life and immortality to light, then if we have got a sight of that immortal life, which he has brought to light, we must do two things.

I. We must live answerable to this life which we now see in the light of faith. If Christ has given us a comfortable sight of eternal life, and if he has opened the glories of heaven to us, we must then arise and shine forth in the light of holiness. *Isa. lx. 1. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* We must understand by the *glory of the Lord*, the glory of his rich grace, and
infinite

infinite mercy and goodness. When the glorious light of God's grace shines upon us, what must we then do? I answer; we must then arise, and walk so, that the light of holiness may shine forth in our lives. When Christ shines upon us we must cast back upon him, as the original author, all the beams and rays of light that fall upon us, and we must have our souls fill'd with pure flames of love towards him. When we have a sight of that life which Christ has brought to light, we must then speak to our selves, as the Apostle *Peter* did to the believers in his time. *2 Pet. iii. 11. What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*

2. We must rejoice in the present sight we have of that glorious life, which Christ has brought to light. When Christ has shewed us the path of life, heaven will then follow, *Psal. xvi. 11. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Christ opens the way into the heavenly paradise, and makes that a plain path to believers which sin had stopp'd up by a flaming sword. Christ

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first shews us the path of life, and then brings us to the heavenly state, where there is a fulness of all that good which we can enjoy, and a fulness of good which will be ever enjoy'd by us.

(1.) There will be in heaven a fulness of all that good which we can enjoy. *In thy presence is fulness of joy.* In the immediate presence of God there is a fulness of joy, or overflowing joys instead of overwhelming sorrows. If any addition could be made to the joy of believers in heaven, their joy then would not be full, and if their joy were not full, they would come under dissatisfaction, because their happiness would not be as large as their desires; but in heaven there is a perfection of joy, because the joys of heaven are not only without mixture, but they are full without any want or emptiness.

(2.) There will be in heaven a fulness of all good which will be ever enjoy'd by us. *At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* It would imbitter the pleasures of heaven, if they were ever to end, but it puts the greatest sweetness into them, because they will be for evermore.

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The greatest pleasures in this world are but pain and anguish, if compared to the pleasures of heaven, and when the pleasures of heaven will be great without comparison, they will also be without number: In heaven we shall have a perpetual vision of God in Christ, and because we shall see no more frowns, but eternal smiles in his face, we shall have a perpetuity or endless succession of joy.

There will be in heaven a constancy of joy in the fulness of it without interruption, and there will be a perpetuity of pleasures without end or termination. The life of heaven which Christ has brought to light will be a most glorious life, and we ought to rejoice, if we have got any present sight of it, and hope to come to the eternal enjoyment of it.





O F

L I F E

F R O M

C H R I S T

I N

A B U N D A N C E .







OF
L I F E
FROM
C H R I S T
IN
A B U N D A N C E.



J O H N X. IO.

*I am come that they might have Life, and
that they might have it more abundantly.*

L I F E is so valuable in the judgment of all men, that a living dog is thought to be better than a dead lion. *Eccl. ix.*

4. It was a great truth, altho' spoken by the father of lies, that *skin for skin, and all that*

that a man has, will he give for his life.
Job. ii. 4. A man will not only strip himself to his skin, but he will part with his very skin to save his life. If natural life which is short, uncertain, and so full of trouble, that it is but a lingering death, be the first and last thing which a man is so sollicitous to preserve, as the best of all worldly enjoyments, how desirable then must that spiritual heavenly life be which we have from Christ, and which he maintains in us, till he has brought it to its highest perfection in glory?

Our Lord in a parabolical discourse from the first to the eighth verse of this chapter, proves himself to be the good shepherd, and the Scribes and Pharisees to be thieves and robbers.

In the tenth verse, he shews the vast difference which was between himself, as he was the true shepherd, and the Scribes and Pharisees who were false shepherds. *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy,* This is the character and image of all false teachers: The spirit which acts in all false teachers as it is a self-seeking, so it is a soul destroying
 spirit

spirit, because all false teachers seek only to fulfil their own lusts, at the expence of the blood of the miserable souls that are deluded by them: The general drift which they have in all that they do, is to gratify themselves when they deceive others. When they flatter obdurate sinners in their impenitence, or indulge backsliding professors in their unwarrantable courses, it is that they may make a plentiful provision for the flesh: When this is their principal governing end, it is not to be expected but that they will excuse and extenuate sin, when they should reprove it sharply, and that they will heal the wounds of sinners deceitfully, when they should search them to the bottom. False teachers do not strive to profit, but study only how to please their hearers, and if at any time they speak against sin, they do it in such a soft strain and smooth dialect, that licentious persons can easily understand the watch-word which they give them, not to fear lest any hard treatment should be offered to their particular, reigning, and rampant lusts.

When

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When false teachers, under specious pretences, thrust themselves into the fold of Christ, it is to please and profit themselves, but not to feed the flock of Christ: This is the end of all hirelings in whatsoever figure or shape they appear, and it is that wherein they do all concenter and agree; but the end which Christ had, when he came to be a shepherd, was most contrary to the end of all selfish mercenary intruders. False teachers come only to kill and destroy; but Christ came, to bring the greatest good to the immortal souls of perishing sinners. *I am come (saith Christ) that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* περισσὸν ἔχουσιν, *that they might have it in the abundance, or excellence of it.*

The doctrine which I shall raise from the words is this,

Jesus Christ came into the world that sinners might not only have life by him; but that they might have life in abundance.

In prosecuting this Doctrine, I shall do three things.

I. I shall shew what the life is which sinners have in Christ and from him.

II. I shall shew what that abundance of life is, which we have in Christ and from Christ.

III. I shall make some Application of the doctrinal truth.





C H A P. I.

What the life is which sinners have, in Christ, and from him.

I Shall shew what the life is which sinners have in Christ, and from him. We must consider that since the fall of *Adam*, all men are dead in sin ; They are not only wounded, but they are kill'd; they are not only weak, but they are without all spiritual life; they are not only sick but they are dead. The death which all men are under by nature, and as they come into the world, lies in two things.

i. They

1. They are under the guilt of sin, which binds them ever to suffer and undergo eternal punishment. When they are without God's favour, which is the only life of their souls, and can make them eternally happy, they are under God's hatred, which brings death on their souls and renders them miserable for ever.

2. They are under the defilement of sin. When they are without holiness, which is God's image, and is their only beauty, they are full of sin which is their greatest deformity: There is a principle of corruption in them, which utterly disables them for all good, and deprives them of all power for spiritual actions; but it stirs and works strongly in them to prompt them to all sin: When they have no strength to do good, they cease not to do evil.

Natural death does not more universally and absolutely incapacitate men, when they are under it, for all the motions and actions of the natural life, than spiritual death does incapacitate all men while they are under it, for all the acts and operations of the spiritual life.

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This is the spiritual death that all men are under till Christ gives them life, and as their death consists in two things, which have been already mentioned, that complete their misery; so sinners have in Christ and from him a twofold life, that consummates their happiness: The life which sinners have in Christ, is a life of justification, and the life which Christ gives to sinners and which they have from him, is a life of holiness.

I. The life which sinners have in Christ, is a life of justification. The life of justification is, when God by a forensic act, as he is a judge, because of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ mediator to elect sinners, not only forgives all their sins, and exempts their persons from eternal death; but accepts them as righteous in Christ, restores them to his favour, and vests them with a right and title to all the glory of heaven.

Before sinners are justified by the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them by God, and receiv'd by faith, they are worthy of death and ought to die; but when they are justified, they are delivered from death and shall live.

Rom.

Rom. v. 18. *As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.* The offence of one, which was the prevarication of the first *Adam*, brought upon all men, as they were in him, and are descendants from him, the desert of condemnation, and by every actual transgression, or breach of the law, they make themselves still more and more guilty and worthy of death: They are all dead men in the eye of the law, because of *Adam's* first sin, and by their actual sins they become greater criminals: They are condemned persons that have no fence against the sharp edge of the sword of justice, and when they have their necks upon the block, they are always treasuring up more wrath for themselves by adding to the number of their sins. This is the condition of all men out of Christ; but to all them on whom the righteousness of Christ is put, there is justification of life: They are justified, and because they are justified, their sins are not only forgiven, their persons absolved, and their punishment remit.

ted; but they have a right to live a most blessed life.

When sinners are justified before God, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, the law cannot condemn them, and the justice of God cannot punish them: The law, which they have transgress'd, cannot condemn them, because Christ has fulfill'd it, and answered all the demands of it: The law being fulfill'd must declare and testify for them, and not against them: The justice of God which they have provok'd cannot punish them, because Christ has satisfied the offended justice of God for them. The justice of God which ought to be the present terror, and will be the future torment of sinners, does befriend believers in the forgiveness of their sins, and in the glorification of their persons.

1. Believers may expect the forgiveness of their sins from God, not only as he is infinite in his mercy, and faithful in his promises, but as he is just to reward the obedience of his Son. *1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*

2. Be-

2. Believers may hope for the glorification of their persons from God, as he is a God of infinite justice. The justice of God, as it is satisfied by Christ, has nothing to object against believers, but pleads for them that they may receive the reward of eternal life, which Christ has purchased.

To appear before God's tribunal, will be for the everlasting confusion of unbelieving sinners; but to go to God as he is the judge of all, is for the consolation of believers, *Heb. xii. 23, 24. To God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Testament.* Why is it for the comfort of believers to go to God, as he is the judge of all? I answer; in going to God the judge of all, they go to Jesus the Mediator of the new Testament, who has satisfied the justice of God on their behalf, and God is now a judge not to condemn, but to clear them from the charge of every sin, to declare them righteous in Christ, and to be their friend for ever. It will of all things be most terrible for sinners to go to God as a judge, because as he is a judge he will condemn and punish them to eternity; but it will be most comfortable for

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believers to go to God as a judge, because, as he is a judge, he will publish the sentence of their justification, and will put them into the possession of all the treasures of heaven. When we know, that upon our departure out of the world, we shall appear and stand before a judge that is altogether for us, but not against us, we shall then leave the world with great joy, because there will be no sting in death, no darkness in the grave, no sword in the hand of the law, no anger in the face of God, and no severe sentence to wait for, and to be executed upon us before his judgment seat.

II. The life which Christ gives to sinners, and which they have in him, is a life of holiness: he first justifies sinners, and then he quickens and sanctifies them. When Christ quickens sinners, they are dead in trespasses and sins, *Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* When they were dead in sin, and had no power to exert in acts of spiritual life, did they then sit still and do nothing? I answer; no; they were unwearyed in doing evil, *ver. 3. They fulfill'd the desires of the flesh, and of the mind.* When
sin-

finners are not quickened by Christ, they then spend their strength and time, in fulfilling either the lusts of the flesh, or of the mind: When they fulfil the lusts of the flesh which are gross enormities, as drunkenness, uncleanness, voluptuousness, sensuality, and the like, they put on the form of brutes, and in their actions are worse than brutes: When they fulfil the lusts of the mind, which are unbelief, pride, vain-glory, lying, deceit, envy, malice, discontent, and the rage of a persecuting spirit, they are then transform'd into the express image of the devil's person, altho' like the Pharisees, they may be devout formalists in the external parts of religion. All men that are not quickened by Christ, either act like brutes in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, which are all gross sins to which they are tempted by the devil, or they are conversant in the lusts of the mind, which are refined and varnish'd impieties, that the devil himself commits, and wherein he goes before them as their exemplar: In the lusts of the flesh they play the *Epicures*, and herein they obey Satan's command: In the lusts of the mind they act like sullen, sour, and self applauding

ding *Stoics*, and herein they follow Satan's pattern.

Thus it is with all men till Christ gives them a life of holiness: It is he that redeems sinners from all iniquity, and purifies them, that they may be a peculiar people to himself, *Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Christ first redeems us from the guilt and dominion of sin, then upon our redemption from the guilt and dominion of sin, follows our purification; upon our purification follows a voluntary dedication of our selves to God, and a consequent fruit of our dedication to God is a zeal for good works. When we are redeem'd we are then purified, when we are purified we are then made a peculiar people for Christ, and when we are his peculiar people, we shall then have a zeal to maintain good works, and to abound in them.

That we may know, what the life of holiness is which we have from Christ, what it has for its immediate cause, and what the fruits of it are, whereby it is known, I shall do three things.

1. I shall shew, what the life of holiness is, which we have from Christ.

2. I shall shew, how it is wrought in us.

3. I shall shew, when it is that we, who are naturally dead in sin, are quickened by Christ, and have receiv'd from him a life of holiness.

1. I shall shew, what the life of holiness is, which we have from Christ. The life of holiness, which we have from Christ, is a conformity in our hearts and lives to the revealed will of God, in the preceptive part of his word: It is when there is a true harmony or agreement between our hearts, and the commandments of God, and when we act in obedience to them. This is the life of holiness which we receive from Christ, and it comes under sundry denominations in the Scriptures, according to the several acts of it. As it is for the deposing and destroying of every lust, it is called *a putting off the old man*, Eph. iv. 22. As it is the introduction of a new nature and frame into the soul, which is immediately created by God without the concurring help of any pre-existent principles, it is called *a new*

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creature, or a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17. As it is the seat and spring of all vital, spiritual actions, it is called *the inward man, and the hidden man of the heart*, 2 Cor. iv. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 4. As it is the impress of God's holiness upon our souls, it is called *the image of God*, Eph. iv. 24. As it is a strong and constant propension in us to do what God commands, to bear what he lays upon us, and to forbear what he forbids, it is called *a heart of flesh*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. As it is a regent principle in us to check and curb us in the midst of temptations, to restrain us from sin, to reduce us from backslidings and wandrings, to sway and govern the motions of our hearts, and to excite us to all acts of obedience, it is called *the law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. As it puts forth itself in strong breathings and boundless desires after Christ, as he is our chiefest good, it is called *a labouring for the meat which perisheth not, but endures unto everlasting life*, John vi. 27.

2. I shall shew, how Christ works the life of holiness in us. He works it in us by the spirit: He *saves us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. It is by the immediate
energy

energy of the spirit in us, that we are quickened when we are dead in sin: The spirit brings the word into our hearts, and makes it the seed of a new life, which is regeneration, or the new birth. Regeneration in the perfection of its principle, is a present work of the spirit and is produced at once; but in the perfection of its operations and acts, it is a gradual work of the spirit.

(1.) Regeneration, in the perfection of its principle, is a present work of the spirit, and is produced at once. When the rational soul is infused into the child in the womb, it then receives the whole nature of a man: As it is in the formation of a reasonable creature, so it is in the spiritual birth; when a sinner is regenerated his regeneration is complete, and he has his new life in the perfection of its principle.

(2.) Regeneration, in the perfection of its operations and acts, is a gradual work of the spirit in our sanctification. When the spirit breaths a new life into a sinner, he does it at once; but he brings this life to a perfection of its operations and acts by degrees. A believer cannot be more re-
generated

generated than he is; but as he acts more and more agreeably to the principle of regeneration, he makes a gradual progress in sanctification. In regeneration a believer is like the quickened child in the womb; in his passage through this world, he is like a man growing up from his infancy to the vigorous exercise of reason in all the acts of the rational life, and in heaven a believer is like a man come to the full maturity of his understanding: In heaven a believer will not receive a new life specifically distinct from what he has now, but he will there put forth the life of regeneration in the perfection of all its operations and acts about the most proper objects.

3. I shall shew when it is, that we who are naturally dead in sin, are quickened by Christ, and have received from him a life of holiness, in four things.

(1.) We have received from Christ a life of holiness, when we are guided and ruled by the spirit of Christ. To walk in the spirit is a fruit of our regeneration, and we walk in the spirit when we do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, *Gal. v. 15. Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the*
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the flesh. When we do not fulfil the desires of the flesh, which rise up in our own hearts, but govern our selves by what the spirit speaks to us in the word, we then walk in the spirit.

(2.) We are made alive by Christ, when we turn away from the vanities and fordid brutal pleasures of this world with a generous contempt; but delight in spiritual heavenly things, and have our affections united to Christ, as the only object that is supremely amiable to us.

(3.) We are born again, when we endeavour after greater holiness, while we are in a state of imperfection. This is to be more and more careful to abstain from all sin, and to be more exact in the doing of all that which is good.

(4.) We come under a new heavenly birth, when we are drawn to duty chiefly by the love of Christ. When a man under the highest profession of godliness is without a spiritual life from Christ, he is then not only formal in duty, but he is partial in the very external acts of obedience, because he is selfish and acts only for carnal sinister ends. When he performs one duty, he will neglect another:

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When he hears the word he will not pray, and when he publickly fasts and prays, he will not leave his extortion. The hypocritical *Jews* fasted, but they would not leave their injustice and oppression, *Isa.* lviii. 3. When a man is born from above, it is God alone that he seeks in duties, and therefore all duties are only of weight to him, when he honours God by them, and enjoys him in them.

It is from Christ that we have a twofold life, and this twofold life terminates in a life of glorification: In Christ we have a life of justification, and from him we have a life of holiness: Justification gives us a right to heaven and to all that which is to be had there, and a life of holiness gives us a disposition suitable to the state of heaven: Justification is our title to all the glory of heaven, and a life of holiness prepares us for the work and enjoyment of heaven.



C H A P.



C H A P. II.

What the Abundance of Life is, which Believers have by Christ.

I Shall shew what that abundance of life is, which we have in Christ and from Christ. The life which we have in and from Christ is life in abundance, because it is a life that far exceeds the life which we lost by the fall : Christ not only restores to us the life which *Adam* lost, but he gives us a better life than ever *Adam* had in his pure state of creation : Believers have a far more excellent life, than they would have had if *Adam* had never fallen, but retain'd his integrity. There is a marvellous accumulation of excellencies in the life which believers have in and from Christ, which was not in *Adam's* life. The truth of this may be seen in five things.

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I. Believers

I. Believers stand before God in a better righteousness than *Adam* did. *Adam* stood before God in his own righteouness; but believers stand before God, and are justified before him, in the righteousness of Christ who is God as well as man. The righteousness of *Adam* was a finite righteousness because it was the righteousness of a mere creature, and as it was a finite righteousness, it could never merit at the hands of God the opening of the gates of heaven. Many great and good men affirm, that if *Adam* had stood, he would after a certain number of years have been translated to heaven, but this assertion of theirs is only conjectural and without any solid proof. What God might have done in a way of sovereignty we cannot tell, and it is best when we take least liberty to dogmatize, or speak our opinion upon this account; but we have good ground to say, that a translation to heaven was that which *Adam* had no reason to hope for or expect, because no more than a continuance in his paradical state, could ever have been due to his obedience. Let it be supposed, that *Adam* had lived myriads of years, in the constant performance of perfect

perfect obedience, he would by his obedience have answered all the terms of the covenant of works ; but there would have been no superplus of merit in his obedience : His obedience would have been what he owed to God by the law of creation, but nothing above what was required of him : It would have been the payment of a due debt, but nothing more than what he was bound to do, by his covenant engagement. The obedience of *Adam* was perfect, because it was a full conformity to the law of creation ; but it could never have been meritorious, any other way than by compact, or by God's gracious acceptance. If *Adam* had stood, his perfect obedience would have been accepted of God, and he would have been continued by God in the happiness of his perfect state ; but *Adam's* obedience could never have merited heaven, not only because we read of no promise made to *Adam* of heaven, but because there was no proportion between *Adam's* obedience and the heavenly glory. As the obedience of *Adam* could only have merited by virtue of God's covenant promise, so it could not have merited a greater reward than the perpetual en-

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joyment of the happiness of paradise, if he had never fallen.

The obedience of *Adam*, as it was the obedience of a creature, was finite and could never have merited heaven by its own worth ; but the obedience or righteousness of *Christ*, as it is the obedience of one who is God as well as man, is a righteousness that is infinite in its merit, and eternal in its duration.

1. The righteousness of *Christ* is infinite in its merit ; and because it is so, it not only hides the blackest sins, covers the greatest transgressions, pacifies God, averts his displeasure, procures his favour for all them to whom it is imputed ; but when it has done all this, there is still a redundancy of merit in it to purchase heaven for us, because it is a righteousness that God in our flesh wrought out for us.

The apostle *Paul* speaks of the righteousness of *Christ*, as righteousness, in the gift of which, there is abundance. *Rom. v.*

17. *If by one man's offence, death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by Jesus Christ.* It is as if the apostle had said thus ; If death has reigned by

by one man's sin, then much more shall they reign in life, who receive the gift of Christ's righteousness, because there is abundance of more worth and virtue in the righteousness of Christ, to purchase heaven for them, than there was evil in *Adam's* sin, to bring them under the desert of eternal death. When there is abundance of righteousness given, there must abundance of life follow, and of that life, which far excells the life whereof we were deprived by *Adam's* sin.

2. The righteousness of Christ is eternal in its duration. It is a righteousness that eternity can never wear out, and therefore they that are cloath'd with it shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. *Isa. xlv. 17. Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.*

Adam's righteousness was narrow, of a small extent, and lasted but a little while; but the righteousness of Christ is both infinite in its virtue, and everlasting in its duration. As it is infinite in its virtue, it merits the highest elevation of glory for believers; as it is everlasting in its duration, it will keep believers for ever in the secure possession of glory. There is as great dis-

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proportion between the life of *Adam*, and the life of righteousness, which a believer has in Christ, in respect of the goodness of it, as there is between finite and infinite, temporary and eternal; because *Adam's* righteousness was the righteousness of a mere creature; but the righteousness whereby a believer is justified, is the righteousness of Christ, who is God in our nature.

II. The life which believers have from Christ, is better than the life which *Adam* had, because they live by a mystical union to Christ. This is a life of which *Adam* knew nothing. Every believer is spiritually incorporated with Christ. *Joh. xv. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches.* By the union which believers have to Christ, they are advanced to the highest privilege, because they are united to the person of Christ. The union between Christ and believers is not personal, like the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, and yet the union which is between Christ and them is of persons, and not of graces only: Believers are not made one person with Christ, but the persons of believers are united to the person of Christ: The union between Christ and believers is
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not personal, and yet it is of persons. *Adam* had union with God by the grace of creation, which was the rectitude of his nature: he had a nearness to sensitive animals in his sensitive part, to angels in the immortality and immateriality of his soul, and to God in his image which was the grace of creation; but the union which was between God and him was no union of persons. The glorious privilege which is afforded to believers, to have union with God in their flesh and nature, is upon the account of Christ's assuming the nature of man, into a personal union with his divine nature: Christ first assumed our nature, and then he vouchsaf'd to call us brethren. *Heb. ii. 11. 16.* The mystical union which believers have to Christ, adds a glory to their life which was not in *Adam's* life.

1. The union which is between Christ and believers can never be dissolved. The union which *Adam* had with God was broken, because it consisted only in the grace of creation; but the union which is between Christ and believers, is of persons and not of grace only, and therefore no breach can be made in it: There can be no dissolution of the union which is be-

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tween Christ and believers, because it does not depend, as to the firmness and strength of it, on any grace in believers, but on the unchangeable will and almighty power of Christ, who having united believers to his own person, will hold them fast and will never let them go.

2. Believers by their union to Christ, may have the most intimate communion with God in their own nature. It cannot but be a wonderful encouragement to our faith, when we can come to God in our own nature and flesh.

3. The union which is between Christ and believers, lays a foundation for the eternal communication of all ineffable blessings from Christ to them : When Christ is one with them, they have then Christ himself, who is the greatest good which they can enjoy, and who brings all other good things with him. When Christ is ours we are richer than if we had not only this world, but many more worlds fill'd with new kinds of creatures ; If God should give a numberless number of worlds to us, they would be only the fruits and effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness ; but when Christ is ours, then that very
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person is ours, who inconceivably surmounts in worth not only all things that are, but all things that possibly might be. Christ as he is God, infinitely transcends in value, not only all the creatures that are within the universality of a real subsistence, but all things that can come within the compass of a bare possible or imaginable existence.

III. The life which believers have from Christ is better than the life of *Adam*, because they have the spirit of God to dwell in them, as the immediate author and maintainer of their spiritual life. *Adam* had his life from God as a creator, but he had not the spirit of God to dwell in him and to quicken him, because the spirit is given to us through Christ according to a new covenant promise. When Christ had suffered to satisfy the justice of God for our sins, he then sent the spirit, as a gift which he had purchased for us. The spirit was given before the incarnation and death of Christ, because the gift of the spirit was as early as the conversion and salvation of any one fallen sinner; but it was upon the federal engagement of Christ, to come and die for sinners, that the spirit

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rit was given before he came to suffer death. The purchase of the spirit was the fruit of Christ's death, and the plentiful effusion of the spirit followed upon his resurrection and ascension. It is by Christ and only by him, that we have the spirit. It is for this reason that the spirit is called, *the spirit of Christ*. *Rom. viii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 11.* He is said to be sent in Christ's name. *Job. xiv. 26.* It is through Christ Jesus, that the spirit is shed on us abundantly. *Titus iii. 6.* The spirit is a gift purchased for us by Christ, and as Christ was the richest and best gift that God the Father could give to us, so the spirit is the greatest blessing that Christ could procure for us, and give to us. Let us compare *Math. vii. 11.* with *Luke. xi. 13.* What Christ calls good things in one Evangelist, he calls the holy spirit in the other, because all good things are sum'd up in the gift of the spirit.

It may be said; Why is the gift of the spirit the greatest blessing that Christ can give to us? I answer; The gift of the spirit is the greatest blessing, because of four things.

I. When

1. When the spirit is given to finners, he enters into them and dwells in them, to quicken or to give them life. He not only works in them, but he dwells in them. *Joh. xiv. 17. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* The spirit is not only with them whom he regenerates in the declarations of the word, but he is in them to give them the light of a divine illumination, and the power of a spiritual life: He is not only in them by the operations of his grace, but he is personally in them as temples wherein he dwells. The souls of believers are the temples of the holy ghost. *Eph. ii. 21. 22. In whom all the building fitly fram'd together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* The souls of believers are as so many temples built and erected for God, wherein he dwells by his spirit, while they are in this world, till they be carried up to heaven, where they shall dwell with God. The spirit dwells in the souls of believers, not only to give them life, but to fit them them to be temples for God, and when it is the Spirit that gives them their form and fashion, as they are temples, their in-
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side beauty and glory must be great, because it is answerable to the wisdom and power of the spirit. The deformity of the soul of a fallen sinner is great, and it is so great, that nothing out of hell is equal to the deformity of it; but wonderful is the beauty which the spirit begins and brings to perfection, in every soul that he quickens and renews.

2. When the spirit is given to sinners he not only reveals Christ to them, but persuades them to believe both what Christ is, and what he has done and will do for them. *Joh. xv. 26. When the comforter is come, whom I will send (saith Christ) from the father, he shall testify of me.* We neither believe what Christ is, nor what he has done and will do for us, till we have the spirit to testify or bear witness for Christ to us. It is a thing incredible to a man's carnal reason, that a God of infinite love and affection, should give his innocent and only begotten son to suffer death for sinners, who are not only contemptible in the eyes of God, because of their weakness, but most highly provoke God by their rebellions: This is that which the carnal reason of a man can never receive: It is
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to him as a foolish tale, that is told without any evidence, to invite and induce him to believe it. Nothing less than the spirit, can cure a sinner of the plague of a secret but strong infidelity, which is in his heart about the truth, as well as the infinite merit of Christ's sufferings: He may seem never once to doubt the truth of this great article, that Christ died for sinners, he may assent to it, as that which he has been taught from his infancy, he may profess the belief of it, as that which has often been proved and confirm'd by the arguments of others, and he may preach and publish it with forwardness, when it stands with his worldly interest, and yet prove a cast-away, because he really believes nothing of it. All that we can say to sinners of Christ when they have not the spirit, does no more stay and abide with them, than dew sticks upon the hardest rock; but when the spirit enters into a sinner, the sinner then not only sees himself to be a guilty condemned person, but he believes the truth of Christ's sufferings, and the infinite merit and efficacy of his death, for the salvation of sinners: The death of Christ, which once affected him no more than

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than a relation of something done a thousand years ago, in the furthest part of the world, becomes the greatest reality to him: He not only believes it to be real, but he beholds such a glory and worth in it, that all other things are nothing to it.

3. When the spirit is given to sinners he then applies to them whatsoever Christ purchased for them. All that which Christ acquired for sinners, by laying down the redeeming and purchasing price of his blood, is applied to them by the spirit for their salvation. As the spirit brings elect sinners to believe all that which he testifies of Christ, so he applies to them all that which Christ has purchased. The application of the Spirit is as full and large as the purchase of Christ: As Christ has purchased for sinners every thing which is necessary for their salvation, so the spirit in the work of application, which belongs to him, leaves nothing out of all that which Christ has purchased.

4. The Spirit by dwelling in the soul of a believer, maintains the life of grace which he has begun in him. When the spirit enters into the soul of a sinner, he not only mortifies every imperious lust,
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and drives out the devil as a lawless intruder, but he keeps sin and Satan out, when he has cast them out: He is the strong man that defends the house, where he dwells, against the attempts of all invaders: A strong man will keep possession of his house, till a stronger than he comes that can cast him out: This is a truth so generally known and believed, that none will deny it, and therefore Christ brought it as a good argument, for the confutation of the malicious charge of the Jews, when they blasphemously said, that he did cast out devils by the help of the prince of the devils. *Mark. iii. 27. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his goods.* It is as if Christ had said; The devil is the strong man who possess'd and afflicted them out of whom I have cast him, and because I have been able to do this, it must follow, that I must be greater than the devil and superior to him in strength: By this way of arguing, Christ not only proved, that he had a miraculous power of casting out devils, but he distinguished his power of doing it from the collusive methods, and cheating

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cheating contrivances of necromancers and jugglers.

There are many stories among the Papists, of the devils being cast out, of persons who were possess'd by him : Most of the stories which the Papists relate about the casting of the devil out of persons possess'd by him, are only fables and lying legends, yet it is very likely, that the devil may sometimes at the call of a mitred forcerer, or a juggling priest, go out of this or that man, that he may strengthen the blind multitude in their errors and idolatrous practices : The devil will leave off to torment one body, and he will do it out of choice, if thereby he can get possession of many hearts ; but no less person than he that is God can force and constrain the devil to leave his house, because he will keep possession of his house till a stronger comes to dispossess him. The soul of every believer is the temple or house of the spirit of God, and the Spirit is the strong man that keeps possession of it. Where is there a stronger to outmatch and overpower him, and to enter against his will? can Satan do it? I answer ; no, because he is not only a creature, but he is a conquered

quered enemy in chains, and has no more than a permissive power. Can sin do it? I answer; no, because the Spirit who took possession of his house when it was full of sin, will not leave it because of new defilements, but he will cleanse it: He that entered into the souls of sinners, when they were in their enmity against God, and threw sin out in its reigning power, will not forsake but restore believers when they are under backslidings. When believers sin, the Spirit withdraws from them the light of comfort, but he never loses the possession of their hearts.

Adam had life, but he had not the Spirit either to give him his life, or to preserve and maintain it, when he had it, and therefore when he was left to his free-will he soon lost his life, and by his sin brought death on himself, and all his posterity; but a believer has the Spirit to dwell in him, as a quickening Spirit, and to rule and govern in him, and because he has the Spirit to rule and govern in him, he cannot sin or fall so, as to precipitate himself into a depth of inextricable misery.

IV. The life which believers have from Christ is better than the life of *Adam*, be-

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cause the grace which is in believers, does excel the grace which was in *Adam*. The grace which is inherently and subjectively in believers is not only from the gift of God, as the grace of *Adam* was, but it is the purchase of Christ's blood, and the work of Christ's Spirit, and because it is purchased by Christ and wrought in us by his Spirit, it seems to me to be of a different species from the grace of *Adam*. There are two things which may prove, the grace which is in believers, to be grace that far excels the grace which was in *Adam*.

1. The root of *Adam's* grace was in himself, and because it was in himself, it was a root that might be pluck'd up, as in the conclusion it happened to be; but the root of a believers grace is in Christ, and because it is in Christ it cannot fail. The life of believers is hid in Christ. *Col. iii. 3. Your life is hid with Christ in God.* The life of believers is said to be hid in Christ, because of the secrecy and because of the safety of it.

(1.) The life of believers is hid in Christ because of the secrecy of it. It is not only a secret to the world, but it is much hid from believers themselves. [1.] It

[1.] It is a secret to the world. It is a life that is hid not only from the sensitive eye, but from the understanding of the unconverted world: It is only seen by the eye of faith, but where there is no faith nothing of it can be seen.

[2.] It is not only a secret to the world, but it is much hid from believers themselves who have it: The excellence of their spiritual life does surpass their present sight. *1 Joh. iii. 2. Now are we the Sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.* Believers are now as much the sons of God by adoption as ever they shall be; but they do as little know what their life will be in the full fruition and glory of it in heaven, as a child, that begins only to read, can know what his understanding will be, when he shall have run through the largest circle of learning. Christ is the root wherein the sap of our spiritual life is, and it is a dark winter-day with us now, in comparison of what it will be, when we are brought to sit personally with Christ in heavenly places.

(2.) The life of believers is hid in Christ, because of the safety of it. As it is hid,

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because it is not seen by the world, and little seen by believers themselves; so it is hid in Christ, because it cannot be lost : *It is hid with Christ in God.* The life of believers is as secure in Christ, as the life of the man Christ is in the Godhead. The malice and power of Satan cannot touch the spiritual life of believers. The devil would destroy our spiritual life, if it were not hid in a mediator, as he did the life of innocent *Adam* in paradise. The life which believers have is bound up with the life of Christ, and is in it as the branch is in the root, and because Christ lives, they must live. As Christ did not die for himself, but for us that we might not die eternally, so he now lives in heaven not only for himself, but for us, that we may live for ever : He overcame death for us, and is now in heaven as our head to quicken us, and to bring our spiritual life to a perfection of degrees, *John xiv. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.* It is as if Christ had said; because I live in heaven, you shall live in the midst of all straits, tryals, and troubles here on earth : While there is a fountain of life in me who am your root and head, there shall be a principle
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or seed of life preserved in you, who are my branches and members: Because I can never die, you shall ever live.

2. *Adam* had grace to stand, and to be constant in the work of perfect obedience, if he had rightly used the liberty of his will; but because his grace was not secured from defection, he fell by yielding to the devil's temptation. The grace of *Adam* was perfect, but it was mutable, as it was in his own hands, because mutability is inseparable to a creature subsisting by its own power: *Adam's* grace altho' it was perfect was mutable, because it was in his own custody; but the grace of believers which is imperfect is immutable, not in it self, but because it is in the hands of Christ their head: The grace of believers is so carefully watch'd over by the eye of Christ, and so strongly guarded by his infinite power, that it cannot be lost, *John* x. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* *Adam's* grace was perfect, but the grace of a believer is imperfect, and yet a believer can do more with his imperfect grace, than *Adam* could do with his grace in the perfection of it. What a

wonder is this! *Adam's* grace was perfect, but because the root of it was in himself, and because his grace was in his own hands, he fell and lost his grace: The grace of a believer is imperfect, but because the root of it is in Christ, and because it is in Christ's hands, it is fortified against all the imaginable shocks of the strongest temptations: The grace of a believer is imperfect, but because his grace is under the powerful superintendence of Christ, he is saved from falling totally and irrecoverably: The life of a believer is in the hands of Christ, and because it is in Christ's hands, there is a connection between the weakest grace in a believer, and the crowning work of a final perseverance. *Isa. xlii. 3. A bruised reed shall he not break; and smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.* Christ applies the words of the prophet to himself, *Matth. xii. 20.* There are two things that may be remark'd in the words.

(1.) The care which Christ has of the grace of a believer, when it is so weak, that it is only in its first remove from nothing. When grace is as a bruised reed, Christ

Christ will not break it, and when it is as smoking flax he will not quench it. *A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.* When a believer is as a bruised reed, or when he is sensible that his faith can no more stand in a day of trial, without new strength from heaven, than a reed which does but just hang together, can bear up against the terrible blasts of the most stormy wind, Christ will not then break the bruised reed of his flagging and staggering faith; but he will strengthen it. When a believer is as smoking flax, because his desires after God languish, when he is so far from having any high thoughts of himself, that he is loathsome and detestable in his own eyes, because of his indwelling corruptions, and when he thinks himself to be no better than the end of a consumed taper, sunk down into a socket, which is not only useless but offensive; Christ will not then quench the smoking flax of his expiring love, but he will put new heat into it.

(2.) Christ will crown the weakest grace, with a final victory. *He shall bring forth judgment unto truth,* as the prophet

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speaks, *till he send forth judgment unto victory*, as the evangelist expresses it. The sense of the words as they are in the prophet, and in the evangelist is this, Christ will perfect weak grace where-ever he has wrought it. When the grace of a believer is as a bruised reed, or as smoking flax when it is almost extinct, Christ will give strength and growth to the bruised reed, and he will put the fire of heavenly love into the smoking flax. When things are come to such a critical point with a believer, that either grace or corruption must have the dominion, and when the believer himself fears that his unbelief will get the mastery over his faith, then Christ by interposing his power decides and determines the controversy, and gives the victory and triumph to weak grace. When a feeble dejected and disconsolate believer is afraid, lest he should be overwhelm'd in the ruins of his own sins, and sink down as low as hell, then comes the omnipotent arm of Christ, and lifts him as high as heaven. A bruised reed is soon broken, and smoking flax is suddenly quench'd; but the bruised reed, when it is in the hand of Christ, shall grow up to be a tall and

and strong cedar, and the smoking flax, when it comes under the breath of Christ's mouth, shall be blown up into a pure flame.

The life of grace, in the first degrees of it, is as a drop of dew, that fell from the womb of the morning of Christ's resurrection, but because it is continually under the care of Christ, it comes to be a river that swells above death and hell, and rises up to the highest heaven.

V. The Life which believers have in and from Christ, is better than the life of *Adam*, because they are in a better covenant. *Adam's* covenant was a covenant of works; but the covenant in which believers are, and by which they have life, is a covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is the appointment of God, to bring men to salvation by Jesus Christ, or, it is a promise of the gift of Christ, and of all spiritual blessings in him. This is the covenant of grace, and it is better than *Adam's* covenant, for it has a better head, and it has better promises; it has a mediator, and it is sure.

i. The covenant of grace has a better head, than the covenant of works. The
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covenant of works had only a defectible head, because it was made with *Adam*, as the head of all men in the first creation, who was a mutable creature: The covenant of works was made with *Adam*, not as a private single person, but as a common person, and as the fountain of our nature, because we were all in his loins. If *Adam* had stood, his posterity would have stood, and would have had life; but *Adam* as the head of the covenant of works fell, and because when he fell he stood in the relation of a common head, he not only threw himself, but all his posterity out of covenant, and brought on them, as well as on himself, the sentence of death. When *Adam* sinned, he sinned as the head of the covenant of works, and because his sin was the sin of a common person, it was justly imputed to all them who were under him as a head, *Rom. v. 12. Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, or in whom all have sinned, ver. 19. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, 1 Cor. xv. 22. In Adam all die.*

Adam was the head of the covenant of works, and because he proved a defectible head, he became a head only for sin and death,

death, but the head of the covenant of grace is indefectible, because it has Christ for the head of it, who is the strong immutable God: He has almighty power to do what he will, and he has a will to do whatever is necessary for his own glory, and the good of them who are his members.

Christ is the head of the covenant of grace, as it was made first with him, and then with us in him. The *Westminster* assembly have express'd themselves with great clearness about this truth. *The covenant of grace* (says the assembly) *was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his Seed.* The covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the head of the new creation, and because he is a head that has the strength of a God, he will for ever be a head for righteousness and life to all them that were given to him, and are under him as their head. When the elect were given by God the Father to Christ, as their head, all grace was then given to him for their salvation: Grace was given to Christ to be dispensed to every one of the elect in a fit and proper season. As they who were given to Christ, must be actually
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united to him in time, as their head; so all the grace which was deposited in Christ's hands for them, must be given to them. When God the Father gave all the elect to Christ as their head, and accepted of him as their surety, Christ then took the charge of all the elect, and engaged to bring them to glory. Believers stand in Christ as their head; if they fall they must rise again in and by Christ, because he stands for them, and must bring them all to God, that when he has finish'd the whole work of his trust, he may say, behold I, and the children which God has given me.

2. The covenant of grace has better promises than *Adam's* covenant had. The promise of life in the covenant of works was made to *Adam*, and to his posterity in him, but it was only to be fulfill'd to him and them, upon the condition of perfect obedience first perform'd to the law of God. *Adam* broke the law of God, and by his disobedience all right to the promise of life, in the covenant of works, was forfeited to him and his seed; but in the covenant of grace, the promises of God are such as shall be fulfill'd.

(1.) The

(1.) The promises of the covenant of grace are made to Christ on the behalf of his seed; *Tit. i. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, promised before the world began.* To whom was this promise of eternal life made before the world began? I answer; Not to any creature, because no creature did then exist: To whom was it made then? I answer; it was made to Christ as the head and representative of all the elect. It is not said, in hope of eternal life that God decreed or purpos'd, but in hope of eternal life, that God promised before the world began. God not only decreed and purposed the salvation of the elect, but he made a promise of their salvation to Christ, and can there be any doubt of the faithfulness of God in this promise? What was this promise of eternal life, that was made to Christ as our head? I answer; it is that which is amplified in the gospel: The whole gospel is but this promise as a piece of pretious gold beaten out into a broad plate: The gospel is a large explication of the first promise made to Christ, or it is a full declaration of the covenant of grace made with him, for us as our head, and with us in him as his seed.

(2.) The

(2.) The promises of the covenant of grace are absolute as to us, and have no conditions but what are perform'd by Christ for us. The promise of life in the covenant of works was conditional; but in the covenant of grace, eternal life, and all that which belongs to it, is promised absolutely to us without any thing that is either in us, or that is done by us, as the condition of it.

It may be objected, That several promises of the covenant of grace are made upon conditions, which must be perform'd by us, *Rom. viii. 13. If ye through the spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* *1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* *Matth. v. 4. Blessed are they that mourn: For they shall be comforted.* It may be said, are not the aforesaid promises, and many more promises of the gospel conditional? I answer; The forecited promises, or any other promises which in words run like unto them, are not made to the work which is done but to the workers, and not to the workers because of their work, but only for Christ's sake. As for instance; The promise of life is not made

to the work of mortification, but to them that mortifie the deeds of the body, and it is not made to them, because they mortifie the flesh, but because they are in Christ by a spiritual union, of which their mortification is a fruit and evidence. Where there are any promises made to believers in the covenant of grace, of comfort or increase of spiritual strength, which are expressed conditionally, they do not suppose any federal conditions, to be first perform'd by believers, to entitle them to the benefits that are promised, but only signifie the persons by way of distinction to whom the promised benefits belong. All the grace which is in believers is from the free gift of God, and has no other federal condition, to merit it than the obedience of Christ.

(3.) The promises of the covenant of grace, as they were primarily made to Christ for us, so it is in him that they are given out and fulfill'd, 2 Cor. i. 20. *All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God.*

[1.] The promises of God are *yea* in Christ. The promises of God are not variable, inconstant, and uncertain; but they are

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are true, and always the same: That which a promise is at one time, it will be the same at all other times and for ever.

[2.] The promises of God are *amen* in Christ. Christ is the *amen*, or the performance of all the promises of the covenant of grace. As all the promises were made to Christ for us, and are made to us in him, so all the promises, in all things which are contain'd in them, shall be made good to us by Christ, that we may have abundant cause to give glory to God for the performance of his promises.

All the promises of the covenant of grace are true, and they shall be fulfill'd, and therefore faith in the promises of God is as good as present possession. *The word of the Lord is tryed, or it is refined,* Psalm xviii. 30. Why is the word of the Lord a tryed or refined word? I answer; because when the word of the Lord is carried into the fire of affliction, it proves to be gold without any dross. The promises of the covenant of grace have endured the test of believers, in the midst of all temptations, under all afflictions, and in all ages and generations: The promises of God have often been put into the

the furnace of questionings and doubtings, but they have come out like pure gold: God takes a latitude in his works and shews his sovereignty in them, and therefore he changes his works towards men, and upon them, as often as he pleases; but he has bounded and limited himself by his promises and shews his faithfulness in them. This is the reason, why a believer has a surer foundation for his faith, than the world, or any thing in it. The world may, and shall be moved, but the promises of God shall never be removed: The world's stability depends upon a word of God's command; but the salvation of a believer depends on a word of promise: Promises oblige, when commands do not. God may as often as he sees fit change his commands which are founded in his sovereignty, when the change of them is not inconsistent with his glory; but he never changes the promises of the covenant of grace. God is truth it self, and is bound by the faithfulness of his promises not to fail in the performance of them: He is a binding law to himself, because of his unchangeable will, eternal good pleasure, faithfulness, and truth. When it was impossible for any creatures to set bounds to God, he then inclosed himself within the

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bounds of the promises of the covenant of grace, and has given all his creatures liberty to challenge him, if he should prove unfaithful in any of his promises.

3. The covenant of grace is better than the covenant of works, because it has a mediator. The covenant of works had no mediator: There was no person to stand between God and *Adam*, or to undertake for *Adam* to God: *Adam* was to act for himself, and the permanency of his life depended on his own perfect obedience to the law of God: The covenant of works run thus, do this, and live: Life was promised to *Adam* upon the condition of his perfect obedience; but the least defect in his obedience brought death: Life was promised to him if he obey'd, but death was threatened if he sin'd. It was upon the condition of perfect and perpetual obedience, that *Adam* was to have life; but by his first breach of the law he incur'd the penalty of eternal death. *Adam* was left to stand alone, to do all by the strength of the grace of creation which was given to him; and his first breach of the covenant brought death upon him, and upon all his seed. The covenant of works was without a mediator,
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and *Adam* was to have life for conditions perform'd by himself; but the covenant of grace has Christ for a mediator, and we have life for conditions which are perform'd by him: *Adam* was to have life for his own works; but in the covenant of grace we have life only for what Christ has done, and suffered for us. When God promised life to Christ for us, upon conditions that were to be perform'd by him, Christ, as our surety, engaged to perform all the conditions that were propounded, and took upon him the office of a mediator, that so he might do every thing which was necessary to be done for our salvation.

Christ as he is a mediator in the covenant of grace, acts and works for us, by the infinite merit of his obedience, and he acts and works in us, by the power and efficacy of his spirit.

(1.) Christ as he is a mediator in the covenant of grace, acts and works for us by the infinite merit of his obedience. It is by the infinite merit of his obedience, that he satisfies the offended justice of God, and so performs all the conditions of life, which are required by God, as a righteous law-

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giver, in the covenant of grace. When God, because of his righteousness, could not bear with sinful man, and when man, because of his unrighteousness, could not approach unto God, then Christ as a mediator came between them, that he might both bring them together in peace, when they differed, and that he might prevent all future variance between them, when they were agreed. Christ as a mediator did and suffered whatsoever God as a just God could demand of him, according to the terms of the law of the covenant of works, that so all the blessings promised in the covenant of grace might be given to us. He gave himself to be a ransom for us, *1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom.* When God was offended, and when we were the offenders, Christ then gave himself a ransom for us: He put himself between the offended justice of God and our guilty souls, that he might stand in our stead, and that he might perfectly fulfill the whole law of God for us, in his active and passive obedience. When Christ fulfill'd the law for us, he then perform'd all the conditions of the
covenant

covenant of grace for us, that we might have righteousness and life. This is a sure ground for our hope and comfort : We are as unstable as water, full of nothing but inconstancy and sinful turnings, and must with trembling say, that we cannot inviolably observe any of our covenant engagements to God ; but it is for our comfort, that our salvation depends not on our own obedience, or on that which we do, but on the covenant which God has made with Christ for us, who has perform'd all the conditions of it. When we ought to be fill'd with sorrow, because we break covenant with God, we ought to rejoice, because Christ has kept covenant with God for us.

(2.) Christ as he is a mediator in the covenant of grace, acts and works in us by the power and efficacy of his spirit. Christ not only wrought for us, when he obey'd the law, and suffered for our sins, that he might reconcile God to us ; but he works in us that he may reconcile us to God. When Christ had fulfill'd the law of God for us in the perfection of it, he then went to heaven to plead what he had done for us, and to intercede for the gift

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of the spirit, to work all grace in us : Christ did not only work for us, in performing all the conditions of the covenant of grace ; but he works in us by his spirit that we may believe, repent of our sins, and live in obedience to God.

Adam had power given him by the covenant of works for perfect obedience, before the condition of perfect obedience was put upon him ; but there was no promise in the covenant of works, either to preserve him from falling into sin, or to recover him if he did fall : He had grace to stand, and might have stood if he had always acted according to his power, but he had no promise of grace to determine the choice of his will to a fix'd indeclinable purpose of standing. As there was no promise in the covenant of works, to preserve *Adam* from falling into sin, so there was no promise of grace for his recovery, if he did fall, and no place was left for his repentance : Repentance was required of *Adam* by the law of creation, if he fell : If repentance be considered as a duty, *Adam* was immediately commanded by the law of creation to repent if he fell into sin ; but no grace was promised

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ed in the covenant of works, to strengthen him to repent if he fell. There was no promise in the covenant of works, either to prevent *Adam's* falling into sin, or to recover him if he fell ; but in the covenant of grace, God promises not only to bring the elect out of their fallen state, but to preserve them from ever falling again into it, when they are brought out of it. *Jer. xxxii. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

[1.] God promises to put his fear into the hearts of his covenant children. What is the fear which he puts into their hearts? I answer ; it is a fear which is a bridle to restrain from all sin, but is the bond of duty : It is a fear that strengthens the heart towards God.

[2.] God promises to give his covenant children a power not only to obey, but to persevere in their obedience. *They shall not depart from me.* This is God's promise in the covenant of grace ; how is it fulfilled? I answer ; Christ fulfills this promise of the covenant, as he works all grace in us by

his spirit, and as he keeps us from falling from a state of grace.

1.) Christ by his spirit works all grace in us. He calls us effectually, imprints his own image on us, writes the law of God in our hearts, and strengthens us for obedience : He gives all grace to us, that we may personally enter into covenant with God, or embrace the covenant which is made with Christ for us.

2.) When Christ has wrought all grace in us, he then keeps us from falling from a state of grace. Christ is a high priest according to the power of an endless life. *Heb. vii. 16. Who is made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* Christ employs the power of an endless life, which he has as a priest, to work grace in us, and to preserve it when he has wrought it in us. The life of grace in us, if it were separated from Christ, would be as a stream divided from its fountain, or like a beam of light clipp'd off from the sun, which presently vanishes into obscurity ; but it is by the power of an endless life continually flowing out upon us, that Christ keeps us alive after he has quickened us, and
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puts a persevering vigour into our grace. The power of an endless life which Christ has as he is a high priest, puts a bar against the total apostacy and final impenitence of any of the elect. The perseverance of believers is not left to the vertibility of their own wills, or to the strength of their own resolutions, but it depends on the power of Christ's endless life and is secured by it. Christ is able to keep them from falling. *Jude. ver. 24.* When he is able to keep them from falling, he will do it, and they shall not draw back unto perdition.

4. The covenant of grace is better than the covenant of works, because the covenant of grace is sure, and does not leave the event uncertain, as the covenant of works did. The covenant of grace is sure as to our salvation, and because it is sure as to our salvation, it may satisfy us under all wants and disappointments, and it may comfort us in all sorrows and afflictions. *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* *Altho' my house be not so with God; yet has he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, altho' he make it not to grow.* When this
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good man had many sorrowful and heart breaking thoughts, about the disorders of his family, and because some of his apostate children had proved monsters in wickedness, he sought quiet and comfort for his grieved and burdened soul in God's covenant. It is as if he had said; Altho' my family be not so with God as I have often desired and fervently pray'd, and altho' it is not his sovereign pleasure to make it to grow, as I have hoped and expected; yet that which shall be my rest when I am in trouble, and shall give me settlement, when I am toss'd as with a tempest, is God's covenant with me, which is all my desire, and all my delight, because it is ordered in all things, and sure for my salvation. The grace of God's covenant is all that which a believer ought to desire, because there is all the grace in it which he can desire: He has no more to desire, then what is in the covenant.

(1.) The covenant of grace is ordered in all things: It is ordered according to the methods of God's infinite wisdom.

[1.] It is ordered as to all the afflictive evils which believers are to suffer, because provision is made in the covenant, for their
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their having speedy and seasonable supplies upon all emergencies. There is no oppressing burden which a believer can be under, but there is grace in the covenant to strengthen him to bear it : there is no affliction that can come upon him, but there is grace in the covenant to antidote against the evil of it, and there are promises in the covenant to comfort him under the pain and smart of it : There is no loss that he can sustain, but there is something in the covenant to make it up to him. When a believer does not see to the end of his afflictions, and cannot understand the reason of them, or pierce into the mysterious design of providence in them, he can then bring them under the promise of the covenant. *Rom. viii. 28. We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God.* A believer can know by the light of faith, that his afflictions shall work for his good, when he can never perceive this by the light of his own reason.

[2.] The covenant of grace is ordered in all things which are either the means of salvation, or the several parts of it. As the covenant orders all the means of salvation, which elect persons must come under, so

so it orders out the several parts of salvation, which they must have, as justification, adoption, regeneration, and a progress in holiness.

(2.) The covenant of grace is not only ordered by God's infinite wisdom, as to all the afflictive evils which believers must suffer, as to all the means of salvation which they must come under, and as to the several parts of salvation which they must have ; but it is sure as to the end which is salvation it self. The covenant of grace is not alterable as *Adam's* covenant was, but it is unalterable ; it is not uncertain, but it is sure. *Isa. liv. 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed from thee, saith the Lord that has mercy on thee.* God mentions the mountains and hills, which are the firmest and strongest parts of the material creation. *The mountains shall depart and the hills (saith God) shall be removed, but the covenant of my peace shall not depart.* Unchangeable love and infinite goodness twist with infinite wisdom in the covenant of grace, and therefore it

is so sure and firm that it cannot be shaken.

Because the covenant of grace is sure, nothing can separate believers from the love of God, and the mercy of God towards them will endure for ever.

[1.] Nothing can separate believers from the love of God, because the covenant of grace is sure. Enemies may trouble believers but they cannot hurt them; if they damp and weaken the love which believers have for God, they cannot separate them from that love which God has for them. *Rom. viii. 38, 39. I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* When the Apostle reckons up both all enemies that are real, and all enemies that can be supposed, he puts in life and death. Death is a great enemy, and it is that which we all fear, and yet life is that which a believer has more reason to fear than death: Death dispatches a believers sins and dangers at once; but life is that which he has most cause to fear, because of his
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own weakness, the strength of his corruptions, and the heights and depths of Satan's temptations. A believer is safe from all the hazards of life as well as of death, and during his conflicts with the temptations of life and the fears of death, faith can persuade him that he shall overcome, because nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

[2.] The mercy of God towards believers will endure for ever, because the covenant of grace is sure. Mercy must be built up for ever towards them that are in the covenant of grace. *Psal. lxxxix. 2. Mercy shall be built up for ever.* What is it for mercy to be built up for ever? I answer; it is this, when God in his eternal counsels of wisdom and love stipulated with Christ, or entered into a covenant with him for the elect, and when Christ restipulated to do the work of a surety and a mediator for them, then the foundation of the glorious fabrick of mercy was laid; which in the superstructure of it, is raised higher and higher by all that which follows this first work. The covenant of grace, which was ratified between the Father and the Son before the world began,

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was the foundation of mercy, and to them who are the objects of this fundamental mercy, all the dispensations of God in this world are made up of mercy. When the foundation work of mercy is laid, God then builds up one mercy upon another for ever. When believers sin they shall be chastened, but not forsaken: God will not pass by their sin without correction, but he will neither change his own gracious disposition, nor forget his promise: The backslidings of believers cannot cut them off from the mercy of God, because mercy towards them must be built up for ever.

Psal. lxxxix. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. Mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth. God will visit the iniquities of his

his backsliding children with the rod : Why with the rod, which is only for correction, and not with the sword, which is for destruction? I answer; because God keeps mercy for them for ever : Why does he keep mercy for them, or build up mercy for ever? I answer; because he will not break his covenant that he has made with Christ for his seed : The covenant which he has made with Christ must stand fast and not be broken. All that which God does to believers in this world when he rebukes, chastens, and afflicts them, is to raise the building of mercy higher, and in heaven this admirable structure will be perfected : In heaven eternity will be pass'd away in love between God and his children, and it is there that the mystery of his infinite grace and mercy towards them will be fully opened and unfolded. The covenant of grace is irreverfible and because it is fo, mercy shall be built up in the eternal glorification of believers.

It has been proved by what has been said, that believers have life in abundance by Christ, because they have in and from him a better life than that which *Adam* had by the law of creation. *Adam* stood before
God

God in his own righteousness, which, as it was only the finite righteousness of a creature, could not merit heaven at God's hands; but believers stand before God in the righteousness of Christ and are justified by it, which is a righteousness that is infinite in its virtue, to merit the glory of heaven for us, and eternal in its duration, to keep us in the secure possession of the glory of heaven for ever. *Adam* had no more than a likeness to God in his image; but believers are united to the person of Christ. *Adam* was left to his own free-will and so fell; but believers have the spirit to dwell in them, and to preserve their spiritual life. The root of *Adam's* life was in himself, and his life was in his own hands, and because the root of his life was in himself, and because his life was in his own hands, it was soon lost; but the grace of believers, altho' it be imperfect, can never fail, because the root of it is in Christ, and it is in his hands. *Adam* lived by a covenant of works, which had no other head than himself, the promises of it were conditional, it had no mediator, and it was revocable and uncertain; but believers live by a covenant of grace, of which Christ is the

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head, the promises of life in it are absolute, all the conditions of it are perform'd by a mediator, and it is well ordered as to the means by which sinners are brought to God, and sure as to the end which is the salvation of their souls.



C H A P. III.

The Application of the Doctrinal Truth.

I Shall make some application of the doctrinal truth, in three things.

I. If Christ did come into the world, that sinners might not only have life, but life in abundance, then all sinners must be reprov'd who are yet unreclaim'd, and who are obstinate refusers of life, because by their own folly they bring the greatest misery on themselves.

i. To

1. To neglect the life which may be had in and from Christ, is madness in the extremity of it. When we reject the abundant life, which God gives freely to sinners thro' Christ, the good angels then wonder at our stupidity, the devils triumph in the prospect of our approaching ruin, the faithful ministers of the gospel are both grieved and discouraged by our obstinacy, God is provoked by our ingratitude, and Christ is incensed against us ; and will suddenly bring us under the effects of his unrelenting hatred.

2. When sinners will not have life from Christ in the abundance of it, they must then have death in the abundance of it. They must not only have eternal death, but eternal death in the most frightful aggravations of it. Sinners may cast off and banish from themselves the consideration of this truth by the lewdness of sinful mirth, or they may bury it in the mire of sensuality, or they may drown it in the flood of licentiousness, or they may get rid of it in the crowd of foolish diversions ; but one day it will meet them arm'd with omnipotence, not only to threaten and summons, but to arrest and punish them, and

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then their laughter at strict godliness, their jeering and scoffing at holiness, and their bold contempt of the gospel of Christ, will be no defence for them against the overwhelming thunder of God's powerful wrath, when he comes to thrust them into a fearful eternity, made up of unmitigated torments.

If any of you have not receiv'd life from Christ, if you would not be left for ever to the wishes and doleful complaints of self-destroying fools, and if you would not bring upon your selves not only eternal death, but eternal death in the most terrible aggravations of it; then be not stubborn and rebellious, but turn at God's reproof, hear when he calls, and hearken when he makes offers of life and peace.

If you say, how shall we get that life which we are yet without? I answer; you must seek it in Christ, in whom it is only to be found. *Joh. xiv. 6. I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the father but by me.* Christ here speaks that in a few words, which may answer all the discouraging objections which fearful sinners can ever make.

(1.) Christ

(1.) Christ is the way. When sinners know not the way and so cannot walk in it before they know it, Christ is the way where by they may come to God. Christ is the way, and the only way to lead to heaven. *Adam's* sin shut up the way or entrance into life; but in Christ a way is opened for sinners to enter into it: Christ is not only a safe way to heaven, but there is no way to it but by him: It is thro' Christ that we pass from one contrary to another: It is through him that we pass from darkness to light, from death to life, from folly to wisdom, from emptiness and penury to fulness and plenty, from danger to safety, from trouble and pain to peace and tranquility, from misery to blessedness, from purity to holiness, and from a state of estrangement from God to a privilege of holding up eternal communion with him.

(2.) Christ is the truth. When sinners have got into the way that leads to heaven, they cannot then lose their way, because Christ is their guide. Christ is the truth to guide them in the way. Truth is between way and life, because we can never be brought into the way of life, without the light of truth.

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(3.) Christ is the life. When he is our way to heaven, and the truth to guide us in our way, he is also our life that we may not die before we come to the end of our way.

When Christ is said to be the way, the truth, and the life, here is nothing left out which can be desired for the encouragement and comfort of such of you, as are ignorant of the way that leads to heaven, cannot guide your selves, and are without life. When you are ignorant, and know not how to direct your steps towards heaven, Christ is your way. When you might lose your way and wander from it, Christ is the truth to guide you in it. When you are dead in sin, Christ can give you life. When you are under both the guilt and power of sin, Christ can justify and quicken you, and therefore you must come to him for a life of justification, and a life of holiness.

[1] You must come to Christ for a life of justification or righteousness. When you have left the practice of brutal wickedness, and have turned your backs on it, you must not turn your eyes to a
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bead-roll of dead formal duties, but you must look to the righteousness of Christ, and rely on it for justification.

[2.] You must come to Christ for a life of holiness. As he only can justify you before God, so he can quicken you to live unto God. It is Christ that can begin a life of holiness in you, and can bring it to a perfection of degrees.

1.) Christ can begin a life of holiness in you, or he can quicken you when you are dead in sin. Christ enlightens the dark minds of sinners, bends their stubborn wills, melts their hard stony hearts, purges their defiled consciences, and purifies their earthly and carnal affections.

2.) When Christ has quickened sinners or made them alive, he then brings their life to a perfection of degrees; he gives sinners the grace of holiness, and he then strengthens it, till it come to a perfection of degrees in a state of glory.

II. If Christ came that sinners might have life, and life in abundance, then let us engage in a strict search, to know whether we be partakers of that abundant life, which Christ came to give to sin-

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ners. It may be ask'd, how we may know when Christ has given us life and life in abundance. I answer; we may know it by three things.

1. When Christ has given us life, and life in abundance, we shall then with great watchfulness abstain from all sin, which is destructive to the life of grace. When Christ has given us life, we shall not then turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, as the *Gnostics* did in the early days of Christianity, *Jude* ver. 4. *There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.* Many are bold to do evil, because God is infinitely good, and they live without the fear of God, when they hear that he is rich in mercy. When Christ has given us life, we shall not then encourage our selves in sin, and neglect repentance and other duties; but we shall put far from us every thing which is contrary to sound godliness, and shall manifest our hatred and detestation of every false way. He that has received the life of grace, when he comes into a place, where frontless sinners make void the law of God, with-

without sorrow and regret, without reluctance and restraint, without shame and blushing, does not look with two different countenances, but maintains his uprightness against the forcible current of the strongest temptations: He does not pray and hear the word at one time, and then at another drink to excess with the drunkards, or join in consort with them whose communication has nothing in it which is favourable and profitable: He does not one day put on the habit of a saint, and be found the next among them who are more like the phrantic observers of a popish Carnival, than the mortified followers of a crucified Christ. When a believer comes where all impiety is so much in fashion that it is past reproof, he then sets himself most resolutely to shun and avoid the sinful evils which others practice, and is never more cautious in the use of lawful things, than where the abuse of them is most common. When the professors of religion make any near approach to the intolerable immoralities of them who are Leviathans in wickedness, they then bring the truth of their grace into question, whatever their confident

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fidant and self-flattering pretences to a spiritual life may be, because it is essential to grace when it is in exercise, to make a man start farthest back from sin, where it most abounds.

If you would demonstrate the truth of your having received life in abundance from Christ, then leave the toys and trifles, the rattles and feathers of this world to foolish, besotted sinners who are the fond admirers of them. Shew a greatness of mind in trampling upon the idols, which sordid sensualists bow before and worship: Let carnal persons see that you delight in pure joys and heavenly pleasures, to which they are strangers and of which they know nothing: Suffer debauch'd sinners, who are the blemishes of mankind, to be the only frequenters of dancing-schools and play-houses, which have no other tendency then to irritate corrupt nature, to enflame lust, and to prepare for the commission of all sin; but do you turn your eyes to the unseen and incorruptible glory of a living and exalted Saviour.

2. When Christ has given us life and life in abundance, it then will be our chief

chief care to preserve our life. We shall then be diligent in the use and application of the means designed for the conservation of our spiritual life, as access to God by prayer, the hearing and reading of the word, the receiving of the Lord's-supper, and the frequent meditation of the glory of heaven. When the care of men is wholly taken up about the things of sense, they then live the animal life, or the life of brutes; but they do not live a spiritual life which is the life of God.

3. When Christ has given us life and life in abundance, we shall then endeavour to abound in the operations and acts of a spiritual life. The natural life may be worn out with too frequent labour; but the life of grace is increased in its strength, by the motions and operations of it. When a believer has brought forth good fruit, he is prepar'd to bring forth more. *Joh. xv. 2. Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. He purges it, that it may not only continue to bring forth fruit, but that it may bring forth more fruit.*

If we do with great watchfulness abstain from all sin, which is destructive to the life
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of grace, if it be our chief care to preserve our spiritual life, and if we endeavour to abound in the operations and acts of it; then we have received life from Christ in abundance.

III. If we be partakers of that life in abundance, which Christ came to give to sinners, then we have the greatest cause to rejoice in God.

1. The life which we have in Christ is so excellent in it self, that the price of it is infinitely above that of rubies, and it is more worth than millions of worlds. When we have houses and lands, treasures and full stores, the profits and pleasures, the honours and preferments of this world, we have then only a portion which suits the flesh, and which is given in judgment to us if we be without Christ. When sinners die before they receive a spiritual life from Christ, they shall then not only be miserable, but the good things which they enjoy'd in this life, will add to their misery: The sumptuous apparel which they once wore, and the costly fare which they had here on earth, will sharpen their torments in hell.

2. The

2. The life which we have in Christ is not only excellent in it self, but it is life in abundance, and the abundance of it does render it still more valuable.

It is most glorious grace that shines in our salvation through Christ. *Rom. v. 20.* *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* The grace which saves us through Christ, is grace that not only abounds to recover what sin took away, but it is grace that superabounds to give us much more than we had to loose: It is grace that not only repairs the breach which sin made, but it is grace that carries us above the stature of innocent *Adam*: It is grace that not only redeems us out of the depth of misery, into which we fell, but it raises us up to a greater happiness than ever we should have had if we had never fallen. The life of grace is the very beginning of heaven. Grace is heaven begun, and the glory of heaven is grace in its perfection: Grace is the root, and glory is the tree grown to its full height and laden with ripe fruit: Grace is the bud, and glory is the flower spreading it self in all its beauty and fair colours.





OF THE

G O S P E L

As it is the

Power of G O D.







O F T H E
G O S P E L

As it is the
Power of G O D.



R O M. I. 16.

*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ:
For it is the power of God unto salva-
tion, to every one that believeth.*

T H E R E are two things in the
words of the apostle *Paul*.

I. A protestation *I am not asha-
med of the Gospel of Christ*: More is to be
understood by the words than is ex-

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press'd

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press'd : The sense of the apostle is this
Altho' the preaching of the gospel be every where set at nought and disesteemed; altho' the preachers of it be laugh'd at, hated, persecuted, thrown to wild beasts, made the spectacles of angels and men, and the objects of the world's scorn and rage; altho' they be accounted disturbers of the public peace, and not worthy to live, yet (saith the apostle) I am so far from being ashamed of my duty, that nothing is more honourable to me than the ministry of Christ. It was neither the power and number of his enemies, nor the lofty palaces of *Cesar*, nor the eloquence of the *Roman* orators, nor the extended jurisdiction of *Rome* it self, that then gave laws to other countries, that could keep him back from his work; he was resolv'd to preach there, where he might expect the greatest opposition and contradiction. In the fifth verse (saith he) *As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.* Never was any man more prudent than he, but he regulated his policy by a good conscience; he was so far from a sacrilegious wilful desertion of his ministry, that he firmly purpos'd to embrace every
fit

fit opportunity to propagate the truth. We may see how vastly good men differ in their judgments from wicked men, about spiritual things: Carnal men think the persecuted preachers of God's word to be most contemptible and miserable persons; but *Paul* accounted it to be his crown and glory, that he was a minister of the gospel.

II. The second thing in the text is the reason of the protestation, or the ground of the apostle's confidence and boldness in preaching the gospel. *It is* (saith he) *the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* No persons (of what nation, kindred or tongue soever they be) are excluded from salvation, when they believe. Here are two things predicated of the gospel, which highly commend it.

I. It is said to be the power of God. This title renders it very excellent; if it had been called the power and virtue, or the riches or the wisdom of men, all this had been nothing worth, because whatsoever is man, or belongs to him, or is possess'd by him, is but empty and insignificant, it is but flesh, and not spirit, it is

but weakness, and not strength; but the gospel is the power of God, who has power to fulfill his whole will, authority to command what he pleases, and is allsufficient to save his people, and to satisfy all their desires. The gospel strictly considered in it self, is not the power of God; but by a figurative speech, the instrument bears the name of the efficient cause. The *medium* by which God works, is put for the powerful operation of God, as if a sword were put for the arm that strikes with it. The gospel is the instrument, by which God puts forth his power for the salvation of sinners.

2. It is called not only the power of God, but the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. This cannot but make it desirable in the eyes of all judicious considerate persons, who value their own souls, and seriously think upon the endless eternity, into which they are going. If the chief end of the gospel had been to pass a sentence of condemnation on sinners, this had been ill news; but it is appointed of God to save our souls, and what more joyful tidings can we hear? If the apostle had said, the gospel is the
power

power of God to arraign and condemn, to destroy and to kill, to burn up and to devour sinners, and to pour out the hot burning coals of God's indignation and fury upon them; this might have struck our hearts with terror, and might have cast us into a shaking and trembling fit; but the gospel is the instrument of God's power, to awaken and to convince, to enlighten and to convert sinners, and to draw them to Christ, that they may be eternally saved: This is a sweet, blessed, and favourable truth. The Gospel is not the arm of God stretched out to smite or punish us, but to pluck us out of a depth of misery, and to raise us up to a state of heavenly glory.

The Doctrine I shall raise from the words is this,

The power of God is manifested and put forth by the gospel, for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

In handling this doctrine or proposition, I shall do two things,

I. I shall prove the doctrine.

II. I shall make some Application of the doctrinal truth.



C H A P. I.

*The Gospel proved to be the
power of God.*

I Shall prove that the power of God is manifested, and put forth by the gospel, for the conversion and salvation of sinners, I shall do this, first, in laying before you some things remarkable and observable, in the first preaching and promulgation of the gospel; secondly, in shewing
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ing the miraculous progress and success of it; thirdly, in giving some account of the strange and admirable fruits which it will yet produce in the world.

I. It may be proved, that the power of God is much illustrated by the gospel, if we look to the first preaching of it. We shall see the truth and reality of this assertion, if we consider the preachers that were employ'd, and the doctrines which they preach'd.

1. If we consider the persons who were first set on work, to preach the gospel, then the irresistible power of God will be greatly seen in it. The first preachers of the gospel were inconsiderable for abilities, and they were few in number.

(1.) They were inconsiderable for abilities. They had no artificial studied eloquence, to allure persons to hear them, they had no facetious crafty ways, to insinuate themselves into the affections of their auditors, and they had no learned metaphysical subtilties, to attract men's admiration; all of them (*Paul* only excepted) were men of a low rank, of a mean calling, and had no humane literature; this is evident from what the *Jewish* priests

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observed of them. *Acts* iv. 13. When they perceived that they were ἀγέματοι ἢ ἰδιῶται, men not knowing their letters, and ideots wanting wisdom, and without acquired learning, when they heard them speak, and saw them do great things, they wondered and not without cause. The carriage of the disciples to our Lord, doth shew that they were men of weak intellectuals, and from the very method which he used in teaching them, we may note, how they were purposely chosen and pick'd out, as persons most undeserving and despicable, that the infinite power and sovereign grace of God might be more seen in them, and exalted by them: Christ taught them by parables, by plain, familiar, and common metaphors. When words are spoken and heard, they are images to the ear; but when our Lord taught and instructed the disciples, he did not only use words, but by known similitudes, comparisons, and pertinent allusions, he drew and limned the form and image of what he said, and made it visible to the eye; he made them to see what they heard, yet often they understood him not, and when he inculcated the same things they perceived

perceived not his meaning ; he painfully taught them in a way beyond what all men can do, and yet they improved very little : There was grace wrought in their hearts, from the first time of their apostleship, yet how slow and dull were they in hearing, when their master was conversant with them ? How weak were they in their faith, and wavering in their hope, after his death, before the comforter was come ? All this proves that they were inconsiderable for gifts and abilities, and they continued so till after Christ's ascension, when the spirit was poured out upon them, and then they spoke with tongues, and were filled with wisdom, and were able to preach a crucified Christ to every nation and people, in their native language. *Peter* who before was scared and frightened with the sight of a poor maid, was now above the fears of death ; he preached the gospel boldly, and with the other disciples rejoiced in his sufferings. *Acts* v. 41. *They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.* What was this but a miraculous hand of heaven, and the power
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of God put forth in the creatures weakness?

(2.) They were few in number. At first they were but twelve men, and a few more joined to them, whereas a greater world full of men had been little enough to conquer this. How wonderful would it be, if twelve naked men did run against a numerous army, all well harnessed, trained up in military discipline, skilled in all the feats of arms, pitched in battle array, and did overcome them? Would not this fill the spectators with admiration, and would it not fly upon the wings of fame in after ages? If such a thing did fall out it would be as nothing to what the apostles did. Let us observe how they were provided to carry on their design. They must go every man to his quarter with his staff in his hand, but without sword or spear, without friends or allies, without acquaintance or confederates, without favour or assistance, without recommendations or encouragements from the civil magistrate, without money in their purses, or so much as bread to eat; in this and in no better equipage they must go to conquer the whole

whole world, and to bring it into subjection to the will of God: What was this better in the eye of carnal reason, than for one to attempt to empty the sea with a sieve, or to quench fire by pouring oil into it? The way which God chose to subdue the world, seemed according to the maxims of fleshly wisdom, to be a most unlikely and unreasonable project, yet the work was done because a secret invisible power went along with the apostles, and supplied their defects; here was not only the finger, but the arm of God, and it was made so evident, that it could not be denied by any, who did not first deny their own reason. It were as ridiculous to say what the apostles did was done by their own strength, as to affirm, that a man having the palsy is able to break in pieces rocks of adamant, or to pull up by the roots mountains of brass.

The first preachers of the gospel were not the wise men of *Greece*, or the celebrated Rabbins among the *Jews*, but the poor fishermen of *Galilee*; they were few in number, and they had the flesh with all its lusts, the world with all its flatteries, politicians with all their craft, and mighty men

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men with all their strength joined and united against them, yet they prevailed, because God powerfully wrought by them.

2. The power of God was brightly display'd by the first preaching of the gospel, if we consider the doctrine which was preached, and how difficult it must be to bring the world to receive it.

(1.) It was a new doctrine. It was not new in it self, for it was from the beginning : The gospel is truth, and truth hath the priority and the best antiquity ; error follows it at the heels, but truth is before all falshood. The gospel was a new doctrine to the infidel world ; it was a novelty to them, because they never heard of it before : It was neither understood by the *Jews*, nor known by the *Gentiles* ; It was a doctrine that turned out of doors all the ceremonies of the *Jews*, and demolished their temple which they so much doted upon ; it utterly overthrew the old corrupt religion of the heathens, and was inconsistent with every false idolatrous way. As soon as the *Gentiles* received the doctrine of the gospel, they must have no more either their former rites, or their phrantick

phrantick ceremonies, or their stately temples, or their gilded altars, or their fat sacrifices, or their merry and jovial festivals : They must have no more that endless beadrol of Gods, which their fathers and predecessors had worshipped for many ages and generations, they must leave all the gods which their kings and counsellors had adored, which their priests, grave philosophers, and religious votaries had honoured, they must forsake the gods which themselves had prayed to in their distress, which they had blessed in their prosperity, whose anger they feared, and whose favour they valued, they must say farewell to the gods whom they extolled by ascribing all their good and evil success to them, and to whom they always had recourse in their calamities. A few men were no more able to break them off from all this, than a handful of us are sufficient to stop the sun, moon, and stars in their course and motion: It was a work proper for God who is almighty in power. Men are naturally inclinable to receive new errors, and they are tenacious of old false opinions : The older a corrupt doctrine is, the more close they stick to it, and it is like a disease in
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the bones that cannot be got out ; it is easy to seduce men from the truth, but not so easy to reclaim and recover them from error : It is a difficult undertaking to introduce light where darkness hath prevailed, or truth where false religion hath taken deep root and got the possession of mens hearts. We may soon make men blind, but we cannot restore their sight : Relapses from good to evil are easy, but alterations in religion for the better are exceeding difficult. When a man hath embraced any corrupt doctrine or erroneous opinion, he cannot endure to be drawn from it, because he is not willing to have his thought disturbed and molested. When a man receives a new creed, he must exercise his mind in the tryal and examination of it, this doth necessarily occasion solicitude, trouble, inward conflicts, doubts, fears, and thoughtful reasonings in his soul ; to all this every sinner is averse. How backward must we needs suppose the blind deluded *Gentiles* to be to engage in this work, when multitudes among our selves cannot be persuaded, by the most convincing and cogent arguments, either to meditate on the law of God, or to consider

der their evil ways, or to try their state, or to look to their danger, or to remember their latter end? They never ask themselves the question whither they are going, and what will become of them after death: They suffer themselves to be captivated by the devil, and to be eternally destroyed, rather than be at the expence of a few thoughts. Most difficult then it must be to bring a new doctrine into course, which overthrow all the old customs to which the heathens were wedded; a doctrine which puts the soul upon a constant exercise, and employs all the faculties of it; a doctrine which brings a man under a strict obligation to govern his very thoughts.

(2.) It was a doctrine incredible to the ignorant and degenerate world. The preaching of a crucified Christ was a stumbling block to the *Jews*, and it was foolishness to the *Greeks*. 1 *Cor.* i. 22, 23. The *Greeks*, who were the wisest people, slighted the doctrine of a crucified Christ as folly, and the *Jews*, who were the most religious nation, stumbled at it as that which was contrary to the opinions of their forefathers. When they who were accounted the wisest people rejected it as folly, and
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when they who had the reputation of being the most religious nation did stumble at it, as a new minted fancy, it must be a stupendous effect of divine power to bring the world to believe in Christ.

(3.) It was a doctrine too holy for a defiled impure world to embrace. The world lay wallowing in filth when Christ was preached to it. *1 John v. 19. The whole world lieth in wickedness.* It is not said a part of the world but the whole world lieth in wickedness. When the disciples came to convert the world, it was drenched in filthiness, covered with pollution, stock'd and overgrown with rampant lusts, and plunged into all sorts of sin. This was the state and frame of the world when the gospel was first published to it, and it was no small thing to awaken and reform such a world: It was no little power that was required to profelyte to the truth, a world that was enslaved to the devil, sunk into a depth of impurity, corrupt in manners, dead in sins and trespasses, and deaf to all reproofs and admonitions. The apostles must go and command wild savages to obey the king of heaven, and they were not only to charge
them

them suddenly to submit without any articles of a favourable accommodation, but they were to enjoin them immediately to leave their beloved lusts and corruptions, and to threaten them with eternal death if they refused : This was much harder than to pull all their estates, honours, riches, houses, and lands from them ; It was harder than to wrest scepters out of the hands of potent princes, or to pluck crowns from the heads of the most powerful and prosperous kings, because it was no less than to rent out the very hearts of rebellious sinners, whose lusts and pleasures are as dear to them as their lives, and therefore they hold them fast, and keep them when they let other things go.

The preaching of the gospel was to proclaim war against all the powers, principalities, and monarchies of the heathen world, and it was to put the whole race of mankind into a mutiny : If the gospel had not been armed with the power of God, it could never have found any entertainment in a world so depraved and debauched as this world was, when the gospel was first made known to the *Gentiles*.

It may be objected, that the same that has been pleaded with respect to the gospel, may be urged in favour of heathenism, the *Turkish* religion and also *Poper*y. The world has been over spread by every one of them, at least a great part of the world, and must it therefore be said that the power of God hath been put forth by them? To this objection answer may be made two ways, either in the general, or in particular.

[1.] The answer which may be made to the objection in the general is this. It is not to be admired, if the fopperies of the heathens, if the ridiculous fooleries of *Mahomet's* alcoran, and if the pestilent idolatries, and monstrous absurdities of the *Papists*, have bewitched the world; we need not wonder at such a general infatuation: The reason is this; all men since the fall have a natural propension to receive the most destructive errors, and to follow the most hurtful delusions; but they are fill'd with hatred and enmity against the truth. The *Romans* either kindly receiv'd the false god's of the countries that they subdued, or they left the worshipper's of them at their liberty; but they persecut

cuted the gospel, and the professors of it with rigour and severity : They shewed favour to error and yielded to it, but express'd a keen hatred against truth.

[2.] The objection may be answered in particular.

1.) The heathens were the contrivers of their own deities and their own worship. Every country shap'd out a religion for themselves, and it is no marvel if they were in love with their own inventions, and were zealous for what they themselves set up.

2.) The errors and fooleries of *Mahomet's* alcoran have prevailed, because they were ushered into the world by the force of the sword, by great armies and bloody battles.

3.) The kind reception which Popery has met with in the world, is because it is a religion according to the flesh, and it suits all the corruptions of men. It is calculated to please the superstitious on the one hand, and the most impious and profane on the other: It is just such a religion as the most graceless varlets would choose, if they were set in counsel to frame one. Popery is the common sewer into which all former heresies run, and are gathered

together. Any religion which gives a man leave to keep one sin will find many followers, but Popery gives a man leave to keep all his sins, and to indulge all his heart-lusts and bosom-corruptions. What pride, cruelty, deceit, and lies may be found among the most devout monastics of the church of *Rome*? What vain-glory and brutal lechery is often hid under a shaven crown? If a man live in gross immoralities all his days, yet the Papists say auricular confession on a sick-bed will wipe away all. We must yet farther note that the Papists for many years have propagated their religion by force, fraud, and carnal policy: They make converts by compulsion, and over-aw the timorous by power and might, they deceive the ignorant by juggles and mountebank-tricks, they hook in the covetous by bribes and rewards, they allure the proud by honours and preferments, and they endeavour to destroy all such as boldly oppose them by perjuries and subornations, fire and fagot, secret murders and bloody massacres: Such diabolical *medium's* are effectual to make multitudes of hypocrites, and to draw men to receive any delusion, altho'
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it be ever so repugnant to reason and truth. Popery makes it easy to escape hell, and to get to heaven, and such a religion will be grateful to the generality of men.

There was something in heathenism, there is a great deal in the alcoran of *Mahomet*, and abundance in Popery to gratifie the flesh, and to please the sinful humours of ungodly men; but there is not any thing of this that can be said of the gospel of Christ, but the contrary: The doctrine of the gospel runs contrary to the flesh and all the lusts of it; it commands us to forsake every sin, to leave every false way, and to mortifie our corruptions, altho' they be as near as the right hand, or the right eye, and therefore it could be no less than the power of God that perswaded the world to receive such a doctrine.

(4.) It was a doctrine that called all such as embrac'd it to the hardest duties. I shall instance in the two duties of self-denial and suffering which are required by the gospel. *Matt. xvi. 24. Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* So also *Mark viii.*

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34. *Luke ix. 23. If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

[1.] The gospel requires self-denial. Every man that will be a disciple of Christ, or a follower of him, must deny himself several ways.

1.) He must deny his own private inclinations. He must no longer act according to his own humour, and he must not follow his own desires; his own will must not be his rule, but he must be subject to the will of another even the will of God.

2.) He must deny his lusts and corruptions. If he be proud, he must learn humility; if he has been malicious, he must love his enemies; if he has been unjust, he must wrong no man, but must bear affronts and injuries from others; if he hath been unclean, he must refrain every lustful object, he must avoid every unchaste look or glance, and he must mourn over every wandring thought; if he hath been a covetous earth-worm, he must learn to be liberal, he must give to the poor, and he must cease from a too careful provision of the things of this life;
if

if he has been addicted to the pleasures of sin, he must die to the world, and he must crucifie his exorbitant and immoderate affections to the creature.

3.) He must deny righteous self. He must not trust to his own righteousness for his justification before God, but he must reject it as shreds that cannot cover his nakedness, and as polluted and defiled rags that render him more loathsome and hateful to God. The idol of a man's own righteousness is that which he grasps so close, that when he is struck off from other things, yet he cannot be separated from it. There is not any thing in self-denial that goeth more against the grain of such sinners as are of a Pharisaic temper, than to deny their own righteousness: When they have gone far in the exterior parts of religion, yet they cannot be brought to look upon themselves as ungodly.

4.) He must deny his own wisdom: *1 Cor. iii. 18. If any among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.* He must lay aside all opinionated confidence which he once had of his own understanding and wisdom, and

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he must be convinced that it is necessary for him to be taught of God, before he can get any insight into the mysteries of the gospel, or be made wise unto salvation.

Every disciple of Christ must follow after holiness, righteousness, purity and strictness of life, and he must live in the exercise of self-denial, or he must relinquish whatever is most endeared to sinful self. It must be a hard task to set up such a doctrine in the world as requires this. The gospel calls for the denial of sinful self, and this raises up all the herds and swarms of profligate sinners against it; it requires the denial of righteous and prudent self, and this doth fill all civilized and self-conceited wise men with strong prejudices against it. The doctrine which the apostles preached was a doctrine that crossed the torrent and stream both of profane sinners, and also of all the civilized men that were in the world.

[2.] Suffering or bearing the cross is a duty that the gospel requires of every disciple of Christ. He must not only forsake his lusts which he naturally loves best, but he must suffer such things as flesh and blood
hate

hate most. *Luke xiv. 27. Whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple.* Honours and wealth must be despised, the cross must be born, torments must be endured, and life it self must be laid down, when God calls for it. To what place soever the gospel was brought by the apostles the cross went along with it : No sooner was any one converted, but the blows flew thick about his ears, and raised up them of his own house to be according to what Christ foretold, *Matt. x. 21. Mark xiii. 12. The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.* Whosoever received the doctrine of Christ was to expect tribulation; he was to go with his life in his hand, and he was to undergo the loss of all; he was to look for trouble and sorrow, afflictions and calamities, perils and dangers, prisons and banishment, stoning and all other kinds of a cruel death; All the motives which any convert had to such duties, were promises of another world; but as for any outward reward here he was to expect none; He was to have eternal life in the
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other world, and to be crowned at the resurrection of the just; but in this world he must bear afflictive evils, and live by faith, and comfort himself with the hope and expectation of a future glory. We may easily guess how cold and unwelcome this must be to all sensual men, who regard not that which is invisible, who have no right apprehensions of spiritual things, who have no true notions of heaven, who despise whatever is remote from sense, who only value what they feel and see, who make this world their God, and practically believe nothing of the world to come. If the doctrine of the gospel had been only furnished with a created power to procure its entertainment in the world, we might as soon expect water to flame and burn, as ever think it could have wrought upon the hearts of natural men. The instruments, means, and methods, which were used to convert the world, did look in the eye of man's reason to be devised rather to scarce persons from Christianity, than to win them to it.

The first preachers of the gospel were unlikely to gain credit with their hearers, and the doctrine which they preached
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was a strange and a harsh doctrine to men of earthly principles, and yet the world was brought to receive it. This could never have been done if God had not put forth his power by the gospel.

II. A second thing which manifests the power of God to be put forth by the gospel, is the miraculous progress and success which attended the first preaching of it. This may be seen in the number of converts, and in the piety of them who were converted.

I. The great numbers of them who were converted by the ministry of the apostles and their fellow labourers, does shew the miraculous progress and success of the first preaching of the gospel. *Peter* by his first sermon turned about three thousand souls; in a moment they breathed out affection to Christ instead of fury: It was neither the respect they had for their rulers, nor the honour they bore to their priests, nor the derision of the multitude, nor the fear of punishment that could stop them in lifting themselves among Christ's followers: They who had no respect to the master, did now pay the greatest reverence to the servants: they who
hated

hated and abhorred Christ when he was alive, had their hearts now enflamed with devotion towards him when he was dead. Alas! how many sermons are preached in our days and yet not one soul converted! The ministers of Christ have reason to complain and cry out, *who has believed our report, or hearkened to our call, or complied with the offers of grace which we have made in the name of Christ?* Men sink themselves into perdition under the sound of the gospel, and they hear themselves into hell, because they refuse to believe and obey what they hear. Why was the preaching of *Peter* so effectual? Was it because there was something extraordinary in his discourse? I answer, no; all was from God. If another man take the very words of *Peter's* sermon, whereby three thousand were converted, if he repeat them over and speak them with the greatest seriousness, fervour, and affection in the hearing of sinners, I am afraid few of them will be moved. We see how some can sit and hear that which most nearly concerns them, and yet never consider or think on it. How then came the labour of the apostles to be honoured with
such

such blessed fruits? I answer all was from the powerful working of God's spirit. *I Cor. ii. 4, 5. My speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in the demonstration of the spirit and power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* The apostle used not the methods which were invented by the heathen orators and rhetoricians to inveigle and entice their hearers. It is out of doubt that clear, apposite, and significant words, which convince the judgment, and stir up the affections, are not prejudicial but serviceable to the design of the gospel, because slovenly expressions disparage and lessen the majesty of divine things. The apostle avoided the fleshly romantic strains of eloquence, which do but cloud the truth, and render it suspicious, and do no more adorn spiritual things, than the dress and garb of a harlot does a chaste virgin. Where painting is used, there is a want of natural beauty, and there is a design to hide and cover some imperfections and deformities. The truth of the gospel is comely in it self, and needs not the gaudy ornaments of man's wit. When the apostle *Paul* preached the gospel

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gospel, he did with the greatest plainness propound the doctrine of Christ to sinners, and at the same time that he spoke to their ears, the spirit of God came into their hearts and powerfully perswaded them to believe the truth; this is called the demonstration of the spirit; this is when some divine truth is set home upon our hearts with such strength of light and conviction, that we are enabled firmly to believe it. Some mathematical demonstrations carry in them a pregnant proof of their own certainty, and are full of evidence to satisfy both sense and reason; if a man deny them, he must disown some principle which he himself hath granted, and if he dispute against them, he must contradict himself. Such was the teaching of the spirit in the first age of Christianity. When the spirit applied any truth to the conscience of a sinner, he enlightened his understanding to apprehend it, and inclined his will to receive it: This was the cause why so many were converted by the ministry of the apostles, and the want of this is the reason why so little conversion work is carried on in our days: When the spirit with-

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draws his influence from preachers, they cannot then profit the people to whom they speak.

2. The piety of them who were converted by the apostles, shews the miraculous progress and success of the first preaching of the gospel. *Acts ii. 42. 44, 45, 46. They continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions, and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. There are three things which may here be observed of the eminent and practical piety of the primitive converts.*

(1.) Their constancy in well doing. They were daily in the temple, they went from house to house, they continued stedfast or they were constant and instant in the apostles doctrine; they were constant in doing what they had heard, and they were instant and desirous to hear more; they continued in the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread, and send-
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ing up prayers to God. The hearing of the word, prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's supper, are the three great essential parts of divine worship, and we may see how constant and indefatigable they were in them all: They made religion their business, their whole hearts were in it, and they went about it with diligence: In performing religious duties they had no other end, than to glorify God and to save their own souls: They hungered for the heavenly food, and thirsted for the water of life. How little are we engaged in that which was their care and delight, and how unlike are we to them? We are negligent of the duties wherein they were conversant, and therefore we know so little of the comforts which they experienced: If we would taste of the strong consolations of the gospel, then we must rise up to the practice of the primitive believers.

(2.) We may observe the great unity that was among them who were converted by the apostles. All that believed were together, they were not only together in the same place, but they were linked and cemented together, and were one in affection.

fection. Their union was not a politic expedient, either to conceal their particular differences, or to promote some secular interest, or to appear to the world what indeed they were not; but their union was founded in truth, and maintained with the greatest integrity: They needed not to study words that are ambiguous, and of a double doubtful meaning to piece and patch up a pretended union, which doth always encrease former animosities, and give birth to new ruptures and divisions; but there was a sweet coalition among them: Their hearts were set for Christ, and they acted as lovingly, with as much condescension and humility, and with such a spiritual harmony, as if there had been but one soul to move all their bodies. In our days it is hard to find two or three real and cordial in doing that which three or five thousand of them did.

(3.) We may take notice of the extraordinary liberality of such as were converted by the apostles. They had all things common, they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. *Hugo Grotius* gives a reason why they were so forward to sell
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their lands and possessions, because they knew before hand (saith he) how the land of *Judea* would be over-run and destroyed by the *Romans*: Whether this comment be true or false I dispute not ; but if we suppose it to be true, it serves to reprove the madness and folly of them who give little to Christ's poor and are busy to heap up riches at such a time, when they can reasonably expect no other than to be soon forced to leave them all behind them. No prudent man can be for levelling or making the estates of all men equal. This is a wild fancy that receives no countenance from this place, and it is justly rejected by good Christians as well as politicians : The levelling point is impracticable, and cannot be in a licentious age. The best constituted government can attain to no more than a good agrarian law or ballance, to keep one part from oppressing another. If all men were equal to day, they would not continue to be so till to morrow, so long as the lust of pride and covetousness reigns in the hearts of men, and the stronger will be robbing, spoiling and taking away from the weaker. This is that must be said and averred, where
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the professors of the gospel are persecuted over a whole nation, there they ought to help one another, this is that which the primitive Christians did; They had a community among themselves, because they were oppressed every where; what they did was not to satisfy the avarice of some, but to give to the poor as they had need. To help one another was a duty, but to sell all was a free-will offering; it was done freely and willingly, for they were neither commanded nor exhorted to it by the apostles, as is plain by Peter's words to *Ananias*. *Acts* v. 4. *While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* It is as if he said; There was no immediate obligation laid upon thee, either by God or by us, to sell thy lands, this proves that the gospel destroys no man's civil property. The primitive converts gave more than was desired, and before they were required to give: They were as careful of their posterity as we can be of ours: We cannot think they were without love and tenderness to their wives and children, when they abounded in love to every Christian: How far did they out-

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strip us? We often grudge to give the twentieth part of that which we spend needlessly and superfluously, but they gave all. If any say they were more zealous than wise; I answer; the wit of them that say so will be punished in hell, when their zeal will be justified in heaven.

Let me sum up all that has been hitherto said. Weak instruments were chosen to preach the gospel, and the doctrine which they preach'd was most contrary to the lusts and corruptions of men, yet the preaching of the gospel was followed with the greatest success: The idols of the heathens were thrown down and deserted, their demon worship, and all their superstitions were rejected: The doctrine of the gospel was received and embraced: Christ was believed on as a priest, submitted to as a king, and obeyed as a prophet: Vast numbers of sinners were converted, and such as were converted were careful to adorn their profession by holy and exemplary lives: Does not all this prove that the power of God did go along with the preaching of the Gospel?

Much might be said of the miraculous preservation of the gospel, in the midst of all

all Pagan and Papal persecutions, and of the continuation of it to our days. How wonderfully was the lamp of gospel light kept burning in a corner among the *Albigeneses*, when the Eastern churches were over-run by the barbarous followers of *Mahomet*, and when the Western churches were lost and swallowed up in the antichristian apostacy? How strangely did the light of the gospel (that had been for a long time as a candle burning under a bushel) break forth by the reformation? How clearly does the gospel light yet shine in some places, altho' many endeavours have been used by the Papists to extinguish it, and altho' they have set on foot strong confederacies and combinations to suppress and extirpate the favourers of it? What armies of martyrs have been stirred up to witness to the gospel, and to swim thro' rivers of blood to defend it? It always fell out that the fire that burnt the bodies of them that died for the truth of the gospel, did enflame the hearts of others with zeal for the profession of it: Is not all this a proof that the power of God has accompanied the gospel, and has been put forth by it?

III. It may be proved that the power of God is put forth by the gospel, because of the strange and admirable fruits and effects which it will yet produce before the end of the world. It is by the gospel that several great and wonderful things shall be brought about.

1. The whole world will be brought into subjection to Christ. *Rev. xi. 15. The seventh angel scunded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* All the kingdoms of the world are God's already, none can take them out of his hands and he rules and reigns among the worst and vilest of men; but hereafter they shall be his by a voluntary resignation, and of their own accord they shall offer up their homage and fealty to him: Princes and potentates will lay their crowns and scepters at his feet, they will exercise their authority for his honour and glory, and they will employ their power to press the observation of God's laws, which no man upon earth can dispense with or abrogate. From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the name of God shall be great, and
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the pure incense of prayer and praises shall be offered up unto him. *Mal. i. 11.* *From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.* This is that which God has promised to Jesus Christ, as he is mediator. *Psal. ii. 8.* *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* In some sense Christ is kept out of his inheritance, till the world be brought into a total subjection to him: He is said to be expecting and waiting till his enemies be made his footstool: *Heb. x. 13.* He does not look upon himself to be vested with all his royalties, till all his enemies be trodden under his feet: All his enemies shall either be restrained, removed, or converted: He will either so over-awe them that they shall not dare to sin openly against him, or he will break them in pieces by his iron rod, or he will shake sin out of their hearts by his golden scepter of grace: He will judge the poor in righteousness, he will reprove with equity, he will smite the

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earth with the rod of his mouth, and will slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, he will mollifie the hardest hearts, and reduce to order the most ungovernable spirits. This is elegantly set out by the Prophet. *Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8.* Every fierce wolfish persecuting disposition shall be either tamed or muzzled up; such as were before as hungry evening wolves, to rend in pieces the lambs, or as leopards to destroy the kids, or as a bear robbed of her whelps to set upon the cow, or as the asp to poison the sucking child, or as the cockatrice to spit out its venom on the young babe, shall be meek and mild, quiet and peaceable, and shall trouble the world no more: The malice and malignity of their spirits shall either be subdued and rooted out, or their hands, shall be tied and bound up: The very lion (the fiercest of creatures) shall become so gentle as to eat straw like the labouring ox. *They shall not hurt nor destroy (saith God) in all my holy mountain.* The shrieks of the murdered, the outcries of the slain, the sighs and groans of the oppressed, and the complaints of the needy shall not be heard again: There shall be none to terrifie the
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worshippers, or to break up their religious assemblies ; they shall meet together without fear, continue together without danger, and conclude their service without disturbance or distraction.

2. Light shall shine in the church, and believers shall abound in knowledge. Their stones shall be laid with fair colours, and their foundations with sapphires, their windows shall be made of agates, their gates of carbuncles, and all their borders shall be full of pleasantness: They shall be all taught of the Lord, and their instructor shall be the holy one of Israel. *Isa. liv. 11, 12, 13, 14. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror for it shall not come near thee.* They shall have high illuminations and large effusions of the spirit: They shall be furnished with truly enlightened minds,
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and with sanctified hearts. *Isa. xi. 9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* This is repeated *Habbakuk ii. 14.* The sea here may be taken two ways.

(1.) For the great cavity wherein the watery element is principally contained. Then it signifies, that the emptiness of the heart shall be filled with saving apprehensions of Christ, the beams and rays of spiritual light shall dart into every corner of the soul, and shall make it glorious within, the darkness shall be scattered, the mists and clouds of ignorance shall be dispersed, and all uncomfortable shadows in a great measure shall fly away.

(2.) The sea may here be put for the superficies or surface of the water, when it is smooth and without all roughness. Then it signifies that in that day the mysteries of the gospel shall be made more clear to every capacity than now they are, all abstruseness and intricacy about the extent of precepts, the intendment of prophecies, and the nature of promises, shall be removed, and every truth belonging to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the gospel

gospel shall be rightly understood: Knowledge shall then abound, and it shall be blest with answerable fruits: Christians shall then believe, love, hope, and obey suitably and proportionably to what they shall know.

3. There will be great holiness. It will come near, and very much resemble a pure innocent life: God will then purifie his people to purpose. *Mal. iii. 3. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: And he shall purifie the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* Under the new testament we must understand the tribe of *Levi* of all true believers, who in a spiritual sense are made kings and priests unto God. *Rev. i. 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.* They are said to be so, because they have the command over their own spirits, and are not enslaved to their lusts, and because they offer up the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving to God. Christ has been purging his people for many years, but there still remains much dross in the midst of them; there are strong corruptions in their hearts, folly in their lives,

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lives, mistakes and errors in their doctrines, formality, deadness and remifness in their worship; but he will come with the fire of a refiner, which is exceeding hot, burns violently and forcibly, and he will purge them effectually. This is called a fpirit of burning *Ifa. iv. 4.* It will purge away the filth, and burn up the dross of the people of the Lord; it will melt them down and cast them into fuch a mould as may, make them more like to God.

This refining and purifying fire shall reach the most fecret and inward corruptions, it shall be like a quick fire that fetcheth out the very dross which is lodged in the body of gold, silver, and other metals. Believers in that day shall be advanced to high degrees of holiness. *Zech. xiv. 20, 21.* *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take them, and seeth therein: And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.* What does this signifie, but that fuch persons as go
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about the most ordinary employments shall be as holy in their converse, and as pure in their thoughts and desires, as we are, when we are in the best frame, and engaged in the solemn service of the sanctuary? They shall be much in heaven while they are here on earth. The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. *Isa. lxxv. 20.* *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.* He shall be rejected of all, and none shall covet to seek his company; he shall be as one anathematized and cast out of every religious society. External and internal holiness shall then be as much valued, as wickedness is now in fashion. *Isa. lxx. 21.* *Thy people also shall be all righteous.* Whereas filthiness, uncleanness, injustice, profaness, swearing and blasphemy every where now abound, then purity, righteousness, holiness, true religion, and a cordial reverence to God's attributes, words and ways, shall much more abound. That shall then come to pass which the apostle *Peter* longed for and expected. *2 Pet. iii. 13.* *Nevertheless we, according to*
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his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Righteousness shall then abound, and shall have a fixed abode among believers : There shall then be no infant days ; or no staggering doubting believer ; but all the members of Christ shall be vigorous and active, strong and lively, and the very feeble among them shall be as *David*. *Zech. xii. 8*. The old serpent the devil shall be chained up, and shall not be permitted either to stir their corruptions, or to weaken their graces, or to damp their joys : The poor then shall have hope, they shall lift up their heads, and be exalted, and iniquity shall for ever stop her mouth.

4. There shall be universal peace. What will produce this, but the powerful operation of the word of God upon men's hearts, and the close application of it to their conscience. This is that which will sweeten their envenomed spirit, and knit them together in a firm union. *Isa. ii. 3, 4*. *Many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,*

Jerusalem, And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks : Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. This is repeated again in *Micha. iv. 2, 3.* They shall not so much as retain the engines of cruelty, or the instruments of bloodshed and war, and as for the art of war it shall be forgotten : *They shall not* (saith the prophet) *learn war any more.*

I know several apply this to the incarnation of Christ which was in the reign of *Augustus Cæsar*, when there was (say they) a general peace, the temple of *Janus* was shut, which in time of war was ever kept open. I answer : This does not look like the accomplishment of such a great and glorious promise, for that peace was short lived, it was never firmly settled, it soon expired, and there is no considerable proof of the universality of it : Did they then beat their swords into plough-shares, or their spears into pruning hooks ? I answer ; they were so far from it, that *Augustus* kept a standing army of military men about him, for the defence of his person, which
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were called the pretorian bands : How then can it be pleaded that this promise was fulfilled in that epocha of time wherein this emperor reigned? Such as contend and plead that this promise is already fulfilled, are not aware how they give the *Jewish* Rabbins great advantage to dispute and cavil against Christ. There are such and such things (say the *Jews*) predicted of a general peace, which shall be in the days of the *Messias*; but it cannot be proved, either from sacred or profane history, that ever there was any such peace in the world, and then they draw their malicious and blasphemous inference. I do not see how such men as say this time of peace is past, can solidly answer, or convincingly refute this objection : They cannot prove by any testimonies either humane or divine, that ever there was such a golden age, since Christ came in the flesh, as is here spoken of; but the mouths of the *Jews* are soon stopped if we say, the happy and halcyon days here mentioned are yet to come. We must take heed lest we harden the *Jews* in their unbelief, and tempt them to blaspheme and rail against the true Saviour of the world, by our perverting the

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the scriptures and putting forced and strained glosses on the promises of the old Testament that refer to the state of the church.

The peace which is here promised is yet to come, and when it does come, men shall then be just, either for fear, or out of love to righteousness; there will then be no robbing or spoiling, there will be no villanies committed, and there will be no injuries to be repaired, and when it is thus there will be no need of war. In the very dawning of gospel-light, and in the day-break of Christianity, the mystery of iniquity did begin to work, and in time drew after it a sea of blood: The disciples of Christ were hotly persecuted, and I think few (if any) of the apostles escaped a violent death. What by the persecutions of the heathens and Papists, the church has had scarce time to breath for above sixteen hundred years; but it shall once be when the people of God shall be established in righteousness, they shall be far from oppression, and from the terror and fear of it: The church shall be a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall be re-

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removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken, there the glorious Lord shall be as a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no warlike galley with oars, neither shall any tall ship pass thereby. The peace and prosperity of the church shall be great. *Isa. lxxv. 21, 22, 23, 24. They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit: They shall not plant, and another eat: For as the days of a tree, are the days of my people; and mine elect shall long enjoy the works of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their off-spring with them. And it shall come to pass, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* This description is incompatible and inconsistent with a heavenly state, for there is no building of houses, or planting of vineyards; or eating and drinking there: There was never any such condition here on earth, since God was manifested in the flesh, therefore it must of necessity be yet to come. Here are several things promised.

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(1.) All the endeavours of God's people shall be attended with success: Their labours shall be blessed, whatsoever they put their hands to shall prosper, and they shall be assured of success before they begin.

(2.) None shall be permitted to deprive them of their enjoyments: They shall no more be tossed as with a tempest; afflicted and left without comfort, but shall long enjoy the works of their hands: They shall not be cut off by a sudden untimely death; but they shall live till they be full of days.

As the days of a tree (saith God) *are the days of my people.* Some say this is meant of the tree of life, which did assure *Adam* of living a thousand years if he had stood; but as this fancy is without foundation, I rather think the days of a tree, are put for a great number of years, for in the words there is an allusion to some tree (as an oak) which is long in growing, and stands a great while.

(3.) God will load them with his benefits. He will give before they ask in respect of time, and beyond and above what they ask in regard of quantity. *Before they call, I will answer;* (saith God) *and while they*

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are yet speaking, I will hear. They shall know how to make their prayers to God, and shall partake of bountiful returns. Prosperity shall be within their walls and peace, shall be in all their palaces.

5. There shall be a general agreement among believers. Difference among Christians does more harm than the rage of enemies : The subtilty of the serpent exercised this way does much more mischief than the cruelty of the devouring dragon. The church in all ages has been pestered with secret and open enemies : Some by affecting preheminance have lorded it over God's heritage, others by sowing the evil seeds of false doctrines and heresies have poisoned many souls. Some by a rigorous imposition of their own inventions, have destroyed the purity and spirituality of divine worship ; but in the last days there will be a real unity among believers. There shall be no more altar set up against altar, or one party inveighing against and persecuting another. *Zech. xiv. 9. The Lord shall be king over all the earth : In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.* The children of God shall all speak the same things for substance, and their way of worship shall be one. *Jer. xxxii. 39. I will give*

them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. This promise was never fulfilled in the *Jewish* church after the captivity, for they were miserably divided and vastly differed in their judgments; the irreconcilable opinions of the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* were maintained and kept up with great eagerness among them: Beside the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, there were other sects among them, and they were all as confident and stiff in their ways as any can be now. What agreement was there then here? It cannot be said that this privilege was strictly limited to the time of the apostles, for the benefit of this promise is spoken of as a thing of a lasting duration, and to be extended to the posterity of them in whose days it was to be fulfilled; but we know there was no long continuance of unity in some of the very churches planted by the apostles, as in the church of *Corinth*. This promise has been so far from being fulfilled in the ages succeeding the apostles, that pride, domineering lusts, fiery debates, vehement contentions, and unnecessary heats have filled all with confusion and distraction. This word of promise is

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yet to be fulfilled, and it holds out two things.

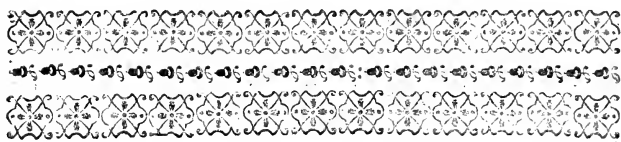
(1.) The entire union of affection which will be among believers: They shall have one heart, their hearts shall neither be divided between God and the world, nor their affections withdrawn from one another.

(2.) One way of worship. There will be no crossing or jarring, no jangling or quarrelling among them about the worship of God. The worship which they will perform to God will have no small affinity with that which the angels offer up to the divine majesty of God: There will be no dissention among them arising from pride and rancour; but with one consent, they will adore the God of their mercies, and the Father of their spirits: This was foretold long ago. *Zeph. iii. 9. Then will I turn to the people, a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.* Their language to one another will not be railing, or bitter invectives, or opprobrious names, but they will say to one another. *Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways,*

ways, and that we may walk in his paths. The aspect of Christ to the Church will be infinitely more pleasant than the eyes of innocent doves wash'd in rivers of milk, and the converse and fellowship of Christians among themselves will breath forth nothing but cordial love, simplicity, meekness, humility, and all other graces of the spirit. The Church of Christ shall then be the joy of many generations, and the goings of God in the sanctuary shall be exceeding glorious. What is said about the shutting the East gate of *Ezekiel's* temple shall be then verified: The Lord will come into his house, the doors shall be shut, he will dwell there and he will go no more out.

If it be asked when will all this be? I answer; It shall come to pass in God's due time; but as for us, we know not the particular season when it will be; it is never the less certain because we know not when it will be accomplished. Let us not proclaim our folly and presumption in foretelling and fixing the time, when God will begin and finish his great work; but let us live in the believing expectation of it. The vision has its appoint-

ed time, but at the end of it shall speak and not lie; altho' it tarry, yet it will surely come, and therefore let us wait for it.



C H A P. II.

The Application of the Doctrine.

I Shall apply the Doctrine in four things.

I. If the gospel be the power of God unto salvation, although it be preached by weak creatures, then we must never despise any of God's appointments, although they may seem to us of no force or efficacy. We must not despise the day of small things. *Zech. iv. 10. Who has despised the day of small things? viz. You who are troubled in your mind, and despair of success*

cess in building the temple, do but wait patiently a while, and you shall soon see the day of small things become a day of great things. There may be a secret conjunction and concurrence of divine power with weak means, when nothing of it does appear to us, but is altogether invisible and hid from us. The little stone in *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, was at first fit to be tumbled and hurled about; but afterwards it became a great mountain, filled the whole earth, and brake in pieces the golden image. *Dan.* chap. ii. When the apostles went out to preach, there was not any thing in them that was either formidable or amiable in the eyes of unbelieving spectators, and yet they were not alone. There was a strong captain that went before them, and led them the way. *Rev.* vi. 12. *And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.* This was Christ, his head was crowned, he was armed with a bow, he went out to conquer, and every where proved victorious, his enemies fell under him, his arrows stuck fast

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the hearts of finners, and the stoutest rebels were forced to submit to his authority. The conquests of *Alexander* were not so large, and the victories of the *Romans* were not so many and great, as the conquest which Christ obtained over finners, by the preaching of the gospel. The most mighty conquerer among men can only kill, or bring under the body; but when Christ conquers finners, he over powers their souls, renews their natures, changes their hearts and sanctifies their affections, and he doth this by the labours of frail and imperfect men. The weakest creature has a marvelous power and virtue given and communicated to it, when God puts it into the number of his institutions, or makes it one of his instruments: If he say, this or that creature shall be one of my instruments, he can then soon give it a power either to terrifie or to comfort us, to destroy or to save us: God is not only able to do the greatest works by the weakest instruments, but he usually chooses the weakest means, to do the greatest things by, that his infinite power may be more seen and glorified of men. We must learn to look to the power and authority of God in all
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his ordinances and institutions: Our eyes must be more upon him that appoints and institutes, than upon that which is appointed, and instituted. The gospel as it is preach'd by frail men, is unlikely to throw down the strong holds of Satan, and yet it does this, because God works by it. The water in baptism is a contemptible thing, and yet because it is God's institution, it is a sign and a seal of the righteousness of faith, it is a mysterious and glorious representation of the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon the conscience, and it is a solemn dedication of the infants of believers to God, that they may reap the fruits of his special favour. Bread and wine in the Lord's supper are things mean and low to them that gaze upon the outward elements, and yet because they are God's ordinances, they serve to strengthen, revive, and confirm the graces of believers, to weaken their corruptions, to exhibit to them a crucified redeemer, to convey to them the riches of his death, and to seal up their title to eternal life. Whatever it be that God puts his name upon, it shall do that for which he appointed it.

II. If the gospel has had already, and shall hereafter have a miraculous progress
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and success in the world, then this may comfort us under all present discouragements. The same power that has wrought mightily by the gospel shall yet work by it. The world is now under the power of sin and Satan, and there are few in the world that have the fear of God, or the knowledge of Christ; this ought to affect us, yet it ought not to weaken our faith, because the time will come, when the whole world shall come under either the renewing or restraining grace of God. Error and ignorance now prevails, the temple it self is filled with smoke and darkness, many turn away from the truth, and the spirit of discerning is lost; this is that which we ought to bewail and lament, yet when we are concerned for the great evil, we ought not to be dejected, because the day is approaching, when light and knowledge shall abound. There is now a general defecti-
on in the lives of men from true holiness, the wicked are not made good, but grow worse, and the good are not made better, but are ready to lose what they have; this calls for mourning, yet it ought not to dispirit us, for in the latter days the deliverer will come to *Zion*, and will turn a-
way

way ungodliness from *Jacob*. The church is now persecuted, and the world is like a shambles for blood and the slaughter of men; this is that which may grieve and afflict us, yet we must not let go our hope, because the time will come, when there will be peace in every quarter. The voice of the turtle cannot now be heard, because it is drowned by the distastful noise of axes and hammers that fills the temple, the coat of Christ is rent in pieces, factions and divisions are promoted; when all should glory only in the cross of Christ and labour after one thing necessary, the zeal of men is spent in profelyting others to their party, that they may encrease the numbers of their followers, and they think they acquit themselves well, when they can work upon the dotages and discontents of unstable and wandring souls, to win them over to some admired opinion, that conduces nothing to faith and holiness: This is that which causes the enemies of true godliness to blaspheme, and it make such as are lovers of peace and truth wish that they had the wings of a dove, that they might flee away from the incendiaries of this erroneous and divided

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age, and be at rest. A spirit of division nows destroys the tranquility of the church, and it is that which may fill us with heaviness, and it might overwhelm us with sadness, if there were not a promise upon record, that all the people of God shall have one heart and one way. The believing prospect of the churches future happy state, is that which may relieve us under all the present evils that are upon us, and it ought to stir us up to strive with God in prayer, that he who has promised to come to his temple, may come quickly to it, and may fill it with brightness and with the beauties of holiness.

III. Is it so that the power of God is put forth by the gospel, for the conversion and salvation of sinners? then the gospel is the greatest privilege, wherewith a people can be favoured. It is a ministration of righteousness. *2 Cor. iii. 9. The ministration of righteousness exceeds in glory.* It is by the gospel that life and immortality is brought to light. *2 Tim. i. 10. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.* When the gospel is brought to any nation

nation or people, God has some among them to save by it : He has some to pluck out of the number of mad, raving, unruly sinners, and to bring them into his garden of spices : What enemies then must such sinners be to their own welfare, who instead of receiving the gospel, as the kind message of a merciful God, treat it with scorn and derision, and rise up against it with a spirit of rebellion and persecution?

IV. If it is by the gospel that the power of God is put forth for the conversion and salvation of sinners ; then it is necessary for us to have a gospel frame when we sit under the ministration of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but to whom is it so? I answer ; to them that believe : Food only nourishes them that eat it, but not them who neglect or refuse it. The gospel is the power of God only to save them who are convinced of sin, drawn to Christ, and converted by it. We all assent to the truth of the gospel, but if we be without faith in Christ, then the power of God will be manifested in our destruction : When we believe in Christ, God will then put forth his power
to

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to save us; but when we do not believe in him, then every legal curse and burden will be bound closer upon our backs, to sink us deeper into perdition: God will reckon with us for every offer of grace that we have slighted, for every season of mercy that we have abused, and for every word of instruction that we have rejected, and he will make the glory of his power known in our punishment. When we hear the gospel, and yet are unfruitful under it, we then fall under a curse and must expect a more than ordinary punishment.

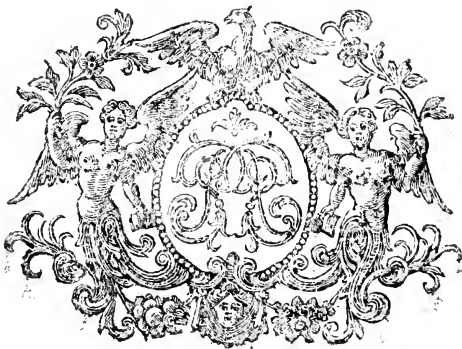
Let us improve our time, let us seek to know the day of our visitation, and let us lay up food for eternity: Let us not turn our backs on Christ, when he stands ready to receive us, lest he go away, and say to us as he said to the Jews. *Job. viii. 21, 24. I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come. I said therefore ye shall die in your sins: For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* No word of threatening can be more full of dread and terror than this: If Christ once leaves us, with a resolution

solution never to return, then the greatest misery will come upon us. Unbelief fastens every sin upon the conscience: Because of our unbelief, we approve of all the iniquities that we have committed against the law of God; and by unbelief we encrease the guilt of all our former sins, because we shew a stronger affection to them, and a greater unwillingness to part with them.

Let us now deal faithfully with ourselves, and let us carefully examine our present state. Has the gospel come to us with power? Has it enlightned our minds in any measure? has it broken our hard hearts, and humbled our proud spirits? has it made sin a burden to us, but Christ precious in our eyes? has it redeemed us from a wicked conversation, and has it brought us to obey the precepts of the law? has it stirred us up to forsake the world, to mortifie the flesh, to love the ordinances of Christ, to seek after heaven, and to walk before God in newness of life? If it has wrought such fruits in us, then it will be the power of God for our salvation; but if we be strangers to the aforesaid operations of the holy ghost in the gospel, then

let us bring our dead souls to Christ, that he may breath life into us.

Let every unbelieving sinner go away, and meditate on the words of Christ. *John* iii. 36. *He that believeth on the son, has everlasting life: He that believeth not on the son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* If we would not lie under the wrath of God for ever, then we must not continue and remain in a state of unbelief, but we must believe in the only begotten son of God.



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OF THE
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I S A. lXV. 8.

Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants sake, that I may not destroy them all.

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H E prophet *Isaiah* in the foregoing chapter pleads the covenant made with *Abraham*, and the relation which the *Jews* had to him, as they were his covenant people. verse 8. 9. *We are all the work*

of thy hand. We are all thy people. They were all the people of God so far as to be vested with several distinguishing privileges, and to be under a federal engagement to live unto him.

When the prophet had pleaded the covenant made with *Abraham* on the behalf of the revolting *Jews*, God gave a gracious answer or reply to his supplication in the text. *Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all.* God will not be long silent to the cries of his people, when they have hearts to pray to him. Neither can the unfaithfulness of men make the promise of God of no effect. *Rom. iii. 3. Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?* It is for our eternal safety, that the promises of the covenant of grace derive their stability not from our inherent qualifications and dispositions; but from the love and faithfulness of that God, with whom there is no variableness, and no shadow of turning.

In the words of the text, God does by a comparison drawn from what happens
sometimes

sometimes among men, shew how merciful he is to save some, when he is just to punish and destroy others : He will make a distinction, where his sovereign grace has made a difference.

That which I shall enquire into in the words, is what is to be understood, by the new wine in the cluster, which has a blessing in it, and must not be destroyed. There are three things which may be understood by the new wine in the cluster.

I. A remnant of believers who were in the church of the *Jews*, when it was sunk into a great degeneracy. God promised not only to save this remnant, but also to be beneficent to others for their sakes. *So will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all.* God does often good to the wicked, for the sake of his own people. *Amos. ix. 8. The eyes of the Lord are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth, saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob.* Intimate fellowship and converse with sinners, has infection in it, and is ever dangerous. Good *Jehoshaphat* had almost lost his life by being in bad company. *1 Kings xxii. 32, 33.* When afterwards he turned merchant with *Ahabs* son, he met with loss but no suc-

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cess. 2 *Chron.* xx. 37. Believers can get nothing but sin or sorrow, when they associate themselves with unbelievers; but the company of them that fear God may ward off the blow for a considerable time from the ungodly. Filthy *Sodom* was preserv'd while righteous *Lot* was in it: This is that which the race of rebellious sinners will not believe: They are uneasy because God's children have a being in the world, but are pleas'd when they are dying, or dead: In this they know not what they do, because the removal of every praying and mourning believer out of the world, brings their necks nearer to the block. When the righteous are taken away, it is in mercy to themselves, but in judgment to others. It is in mercy to themselves, because they are taken away from the evil to come, that they may not see or feel it when it does come. *Isa.* lvii. 1. *The righteous are taken away for the righteous to come.* It is in judgment to others, because they are taken away that evil may come, and that the judgments of God may run down in a full and strong current. If a nation be full of sin, yet if there be in it such as wrestle with God in prayer for it, it may then

then be hoped, that there is mercy in store for it, and that God will not forsake it altho' he may afflict it; but when a nation abounds in sin, and at the same time such are snatch'd away as were found in the faith and blameless in their lives, who were fit to reprove the world as it is heretical and to condemn the world as it is immoral, we may then fear that God is opening the flood-gates of his judgments, and going to pour out the vials of his wrath upon a people, who have the gospel but do not bring forth the fruits thereof.

We should be very insensible of our present state and exceeding unskillfull in observing the face of the times, if we should not grant this to be too applicable to us in this nation. Several faithful witnesses of Christ against errors and immoralities, and such as stirred up themselves to pray for the averting of impendent judgments, have been pluck'd away, and yet not only the profane fools among us triumph, but too many professors, who have made shipwreck either of faith, by embracing Popish or Socinian errors, or of a good conscience, by following lewd practices, laugh among themselves and are lifted up with
that

that which they ought to bewail and lament. If this spirit should live among us, after all the methods which God has taken to restrain and reform us, after all the reproofs and rebukes which he has given us, and after all the frowns of his angry face, and the signal tokens of his displeasure, that we have been under, then we may fear and tremble, when we consider what our end is like to be.

II. The parents of elect children. It is for the elects sake who are in the loins of their parents, that their transgressing parents are spared. The ninth verse favours this sense. God had spoken of vengeance, and he promises to preserve some, from whom he would bring forth such children as should be inheritors of his mountain. *I will bring forth (saith God) a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountain: And mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.* God has not only fixed thoughts of love and peace towards the elect, all the time of their unregeneracy, but till they be brought forth into the world he remits the punishment of their parents: ungodly parents escape the sharp edge of God's sword, till they have
brought

brought forth such children, as are chosen vessels for his sanctuary.

III. Grace in the hearts of believers when it is feeble and weak. It is to this interpretation of the words that I shall adhere, without excluding or rejecting any other sense of them which may also be true. Weak grace, or grace in its smallest beginnings, is the new wine in the cluster which God will not destroy, because a blessing is in it. It is new, because it is grace in its infancy, and it is in the cluster, because it is grace in a narrow compass: It is new, because it is grace in the root, and it is in the cluster, because it is small for its measure: It is new because it is grace springing up in the heart, and it is in the cluster because it is of no great extent. The words allude to what is done by vine-dressers and husbandmen; when a vine-dresser or husbandman is ready to cut down a vine when he thinks there is no hope of its bearing fruit, because it is blasted or decay'd, if one that is standing by see a cluster upon it, which is a proof that there is still life in it, he cries out to the vine-dresser or husbandman, to hold his hand and forbear to cut it down. Destroy
it

it not (says the ſtander by,) becauſe there is a bleſſing in it. There is yet life and ſap in it, which argue its revival and future fruitfulneſs. This repreſents to us the tender love of God towards weak believers : When he ſees much ſin in them which his juſtice might puniſh, yet becauſe he ſees the ſeeds of grace which he has ſown in their hearts, he not only forbears to puniſh them but he maintains and ſtrengthens his own work in them : He nips and withers the ſpoutings and buddings of their corruptions by the north-wind of afflictions, as a gardener cuts off the luxuriant branches of a vine ; but he warms and cheriſhes, by the gentle breathings of the ſouth-wind of his ſpirit, the ſeminal principles of grace which he has formed in them, when they are ready to be overwhelmed by the power and force of indwelling ſin.

The doctrine which I ſhall raiſe from the words is this :

God

God will preserve the weakest Grace, and not suffer it to be destroy'd, where ever it is to be found, because a blessing is in it.

In speaking to this doctrine, I shall do five things.

I. I shall shew, what that weak grace is, which has a blessing in it.

II. I shall shew, what the blessing is, which is in weak grace, when it is as the new wine in the cluster.

III. I shall shew, how a blessing from God comes to be upon the weak grace which is in believers.

IV. I shall shew, why God preserves the weak grace which is in believers, and will not suffer it to be destroy'd.

V. I shall apply the truth.





C H A P. I.

*What that weak grace is
which has a blessing in it.*

I Shall shew what that weak grace is, which has a blessing in it, as it is a gift from God, and is subjectively and inherently in us. It is that spiritual life or quickening which is like the infant that moves now and then in the womb, but can hardly be felt: It is grace that rises up in true desires after the enjoyment of God and Christ, after a deliverance from sin, and after a conformity to God in holiness. Desires after God and Christ, are grace: Grace desired is a sure testimony of grace received. When a man has desires either of repentance towards God, or of faith in Jesus Christ, or
of

of a real love to heavenly objects, or of unfeigned obedience to the law of God, or of a deep humility under the sense of sin, or of a diligent and constant care to mortifie every corruption, he has then grace.

It may be asked, how shall we know when our desires after spiritual things are grace? I answer; it is by five things that we may know when our desires after spiritual things, are grace.

I. Our desires after spiritual things are grace, when they are agreeable to the nature of spiritual things. Our desires after spiritual things must not only be true, real, and unfeigned; but they must be suitable to the quality of spiritual things, before they are grace. When *Balaam* desired to die the death of the righteous, his desires were true. *Numb. xxiii. 10. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* *Balaam* did not dissemble, or speak one thing when he desired another, and yet his desires were not right, because when he desired the death of the righteous, he did not desire it as that which has a life of holiness going before it, and a perfection of holiness immediately following after it.

Our

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Our desires after spiritual things must be spiritual : When spiritual things are desired only as things which are morally good, then our desires after them are not gracious desires, as when we desire redemption from hell, only as it is a desirable thing to be freed from the greatest misery, or when we desire heaven, only because it is a good thing to have ease and rest without trouble and labour.

Our desires are grace, when we desire spiritual things spiritually, or in a way conformable to the nature of spiritual things : This is to desire goodness, because it is of God, to desire grace, that we may get our corruptions checqu'd and bear a likeness to God in holiness, and to wish for heaven, that we may have communion with God in beholding his glory, and in the fruition of his love : Such desires are grace, and they are not to be found in unconverted sinners who have not the spirit. *Jude. ver. 19. Sensual, having not the spirit.* They that have not the spirit, have no desires after spiritual things : They do not desire the spirit of regeneration, because they are of the world and cannot receive him. *Joh. xiv. 17.* They do not desire to
 bewail

bewail their state of spiritual death wherein they are, because they are dead in sin. *Eph. ii. 1.* They do not desire God as their portion, because they are not born again. *1 Job. iv. 7.* They do not desire to walk before God in holiness, because they have not the spirit, as he is a spirit of sanctification: None can walk in the spirit, before they be quickened by the spirit. *Gal. v. 25.* They do not desire to pray in truth, because they are without the help of the holy ghost: There must be grace in the heart, before we can praise God, or pray unto him in truth. *Col. iii. 15.* They do not desire either to confess their sins or to turn from them, because their inward part is wickedness. *Psal. v. 9.* They do not desire to be humbled for their sins, because their hearts are hearts of stone. *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* They do not desire to be brought into subjection to the law of God, because they are full of enmity against him. *Rom. viii. 7.* They do not desire fellowship with Christ, because they are alienated from the life of God. *Eph. iv. 18.* They do not desire to know the way of life, because

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they love darkness rather than light. *Job.*
iii. 19.

There must be a principle of spiritual life, before there can be spiritual desires after spiritual things in a spiritual way: Where there is grace, earthly as well as spiritual things, are desired in a heavenly way; but where there is no grace, heavenly objects are desired only in a natural, carnal, earthly way.

II. Our desires after spiritual things are grace, when we do not suffer our desires to slide off from our hearts, but follow our desires with purposes, our purposes with endeavours, and our endeavours with perseverance, till we come to the enjoyment of the things which we desire.

III. Our desires after spiritual things are grace, when they move and run after God, and rest in nothing less than God himself, whose fulness is both inexhaustible and unsearchable. The desires of a regenerate soul can only be satisfied with the fulness of God, which can neither be exhausted, nor searched out. All the desires of a regenerate person are confined to God as one object, but not to one act: They are like numbers, none of which are so
great

great but they are still capable of additions.

IV. Our desires after spiritual things are grace, when they bridle and restrain us from all sin. A superficial desire or a faint wish not to sin, where there is a daily running into sin, is not grace; but if there be desires in us that not only match but master our corruptions, that eat into the bowels of every lust, and that grow up into a sharper animosity against all sin, then our desires are grace.

V. Our desires after spiritual things are grace, when they increase our thirst after more of God. There are no enjoyments of God in this life so full, wherein new desires after more of him are not raised. What is a gracious desire? I answer; It is the flame of a renewed heart, which does not spend its stock or strength by emission, but quickens its vigour by a continual ascent towards God.

If our desires after spiritual things be agreeable to the nature and quality of spiritual things; if our desires do not slide off from our hearts, till we have the things which we desire; if our desires run and move after God, and can rest in nothing

short of God himself; if our desires bridle and restrain us from all sin; and if our desires increase our thirst after more of God, then our desires are grace.



C H A P. II.

What the blessing is which is in weak grace.

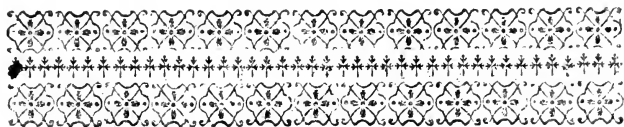
I Shall shew what the blessing is which is in weak grace, when it is as the new wine in the cluster. It is the blessing of preservation, and of fruitfulness: It shall be preserv'd, and it shall be increased and made fruitful.

I. Weak grace shall be preserv'd. *Isai.* xxvii. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. God keeps it night and day, that none may hurt or destroy it.*

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All the power of hell cannot prevail against weak grace, because God watches over it for its preservation.

II. Weak grace shall be increased or made fruitful. Weak grace shall increase till it come to its full growth. It is a great blessing for God to give grace to us, and it is his blessing upon the grace, which he has given to us, that brings it to maturity : When God has begun a good work in us, he will perfect it. *Phil. i. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Christ. ἐπιτελέσει. He will finish or bring it to perfection.* The good work, which God had begun in the *Philippians*, was the work of grace, as it is distinguished and diversified in all the various operations, and vital acts of it ; The apostle was confident that God who had begun this good work, would bring it to perfection. God strengthens the faith of a believer, inflames his love, quickens and raises his spiritual appetite, fires his zeal, and invigorates his motion towards heaven, till all clouds and darkness be scattered by the morning light of a bright and glorious day.



C H A P. III.

How a blessing from God comes to be upon the weak grace which is in believers.

I Shall shew how a blessing from God comes to be upon the weak grace which is in believers. It is not only by and through Christ, that the gift of all grace comes to us, but it is by and thro' Christ that there is a blessing in the grace which is given to us. All grace is given to us through Christ, it is *through Christ that the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles.* Gal. iii. 14. What is the blessing of *Abraham*? I answer; all the blessings of the covenant of grace, as they are freely given to us through Christ: He was

was made a curse, that we might have the blessings which are promised in the covenant of grace: We have the blessing of righteousness and eternal life by the death of Christ. As all grace comes to us thro' Christ, so it is thro' him that a blessing is upon the grace that is wrought in us, that it may spring up to everlasting life. We have the blessing of justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and when we are justified because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, the grace of sanctification is then not only wrought in us by the spirit of God, but the blessing of a preserving and fructifying virtue is put into it.





C H A P I V .

Reasons given, why God preserves the weak grace which is in believers, and will not suffer it to be destroy'd.

I Shall shew why God preserves the weak grace which is in believers, and will not suffer it to be destroy'd. I shall do this in four things.

I. Believers that are weak are as much the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ as believers that are strong. A lively believer is not more the adopted Son of God, than he that is weak, because all believers are equal as to their sonship: All believers are equally sons by adoption, and because they are so they must all live, and not die.

die. Converted sinners are the seed or generation of Christ. *Psal.* xxii. 30. *A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.* Sinners are made actually the seed of Christ, by having a spiritual nature transmitted to them: They were given of God the father to Christ from eternity, who as a surety did from eternity undertake to save them, and what he undertook for them, he effected in time; but when they come under a new birth in regeneration, they are then as truly the seed and generation of Christ, as unrenewed sinners are the seed and generation of the old *Adam*. Weak believers are the seed of Christ, and because they are the seed of Christ, none of them must be lost, and the work of grace must prosper in them.

II. Weak believers, as well as believers that are strong, are the members of Christ's mystical body. *Eph.* v. 30. *We are members of his body.* If grace did perish in any of the members of Christ's mystical body, the mystical body of Christ would then be defective and deformed; but Christ will not suffer his mystical body either to be under any defects, or to have the least deformity:

deformity : The body of Christ must have all its parts, and it must have a perfection of beauty : As Christ has a fulness of power to do whatever he will, so he has the affection of a head to his mystical body, and to all the members of it : The meanest and lowest part of his mystical body, is never without the defence of his powerful arm, and can never be from under his tender care. It is inconsistent with the infinite love, which Christ bears to his mystical body, for him to stand by, and see either sin within, or Satan without, to make a prey of any of his members, or to destroy the weak grace which is in believers.

III. The spirit of God dwells in every heart where there is the weakest grace. What is grace in the heart, but the fruit of the personal presence of the spirit of God in the soul of a saint? The weakest grace does prove the spirit of God to dwell and inhabit in believers, even as the smallest streaks of light from the sun demonstrate that the sun is risen in our hemisphere, when we neither feel his warmth, nor see the brightness of his vigorous beams

beams and rays. All believers have the spirit dwelling in them, and if all believers have the spirit to dwell in them, then the weakest believers are not without him as their indweller. *Rom. viii. 9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you.* The spirit of God by his personal inhabitation in believers does two things.

1. He rules in their souls and as their sovereign Lord exercises the power of a supreme regency in them, whereby they are not only freed from the tyrannical incroachments of Satan, but from the reign and dominion of indwelling sin. Sin in believers does often rebel and struggles to resume its lost power, but it can never reign in them or over them. The rebellious motions of sin in a believer may be so violent and frequent, that they may look like the former dominion and empire of it; but a believer cannot be brought under the reign and dominion of sin.

(1.) Because there is something in him which consents not to the insurrections and usurpations of sin. Weak grace in a believer may be overpower'd and born down by
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by sin for a time, but it never fides and Joyns with it.

(2.) The spirit of God as a governour dwells in a believer, that can neither be deposed nor dispossess'd. He always can maintain his own right, and there cannot be a stronger then he to drive and thrust him out.

2. The spirit of God dwells and abides in a believer and that for ever. When he once enters into the heart, he never totally departs. *Job. xiv. 16. I will pray the father, and he shall send you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* The perpetuity of the spirit's inhabitation in a believer prevents the ruin, or utter decay of the weak grace which is in him : There may be a suspension of the strengthening and comforting influences of the spirit in a believer, but never of his quickening presence, because he dwells and abides in a believer, for ever. A believer may be under such decays that he may not know that he lives, and yet he cannot lose his life : Grace in a believer may be very weak, and yet when it is in the most declining condition it never dies. When grace may seem to be ready to die, it dies not, because
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the spirit of God dwells in a believer to revive it.

IV. Christ intercedes in heaven for the preservation of the weakest grace. As the weakest grace is the fruit of Christ's purchase and was procured by the price of his blood, so it is preserv'd by his intercession in heaven. When new sins render believers worthy of death, when their own conscience does witness against them, and when Satan not only aggravates their sins, but urges the righteous sentence of the law against them, and pleads thereupon that they may be hewn down, as barren trees and cast into unquenchable fire, Christ then interposes for them by his mediatory power : What is it that Christ does for them by the interposure of his mediatory power on their behalf? I answer; he pleads that the obligation of the law is cancell'd and is no longer in force against believers, he silences the cries of conscience, he answers the accusations of Satan, when they are not fictions but grounded on the righteousness of the law, and gives weak believers strength, that they may not draw back unto perdition, and prove cast-aways. *Zech. iii. 2. The Lord said*

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said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand pluck'd out of the fire? When Christ says, is not this a brand pluck'd out of the fire? It is as if he had said; O Satan, Joshua is but newly pluck'd as a brand out of the burning fire, and he must have some ashes upon him to fully him: He is as a brand that burns at both ends and is almost quite consumed, and shall this brand that has so lately been pluck'd out of the fire, be thrown again into the flames? If he have many new sins to defile him, he shall never be without my righteousness to beautify him. ver. 4. Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto Joshua he said, behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will cloath thee with change of raiment. When a believer falls into any new sin, and defiles his garments, the devil then takes the right hand of him and accuses him; but Christ who is at the right hand of God, takes up the cause of the accused believer, and answers to all the accusations which are brought against him: Father (says Christ) this weak believer has filthy garments, because of his new backslidings, but pity him in his weakness,

weakness, and spare him upon my account : I have suffered all that which his sins can deserve, and I have done for him all that which the law can demand, and therefore be favourable to him for my sake : It will be no loss or injury to thy justice, to have him saved by my death, but it will proclaim for ever the merit of my death, and the triumphant conquest of thy grace, to have him victoriously carried away, and delivered from being the prey of the terrible one, who seeks to destroy and devour him.

When weak believers stand as trees almost dead, when the ax of justice might be laid to their roots, and when they might have death inflicted on them as the reward of their new sins, Christ then stands by and says ; destroy them not and cut them not down, for my righteousness is upon them, and there is a work of my spirit in them, which is as new wine in the cluster : There is life in them and it shall be preserved, altho' it now languishes, because I will be as a refreshing dew to their withered roots, and from me their ripe fruit shall be found. The weakest grace in the soul of a believer has a blessing

sing in it, and it shall not be destroy'd. Christ intercedes for a believer when he is as a brand half burnt and wasted in the fire, and because of Christ's intercession he shall be saved from a total consumption.

If the weakest believers be the spiritual seed of Christ, and a generation that must live to praise him; if they be the members of his mystical body for whom he has a most tender affection; if they have the spirit of God to dwell in them, and to revive them under all decays; and if it be the work of Christ now in heaven to intercede for the preservation of their weak grace; then the weakest grace which is found in believers shall not be destroy'd, but it shall grow and increase till it come to its perfection in glory.





C H A P. V.

The Application of the doctrinal Truth.

I SHALL apply the truth in five things

I. If God will not destroy the weakest grace, but will have a tender regard to a cluster, where there is not a plentiful vintage; then in imitation of God, let not us discourage the weakest grace in Christians of the lowest stature. Believers that are weak in grace, must be the objects of our care, but not of our contempt, of our tender affections, but not of our neglect, of our pity, but not of our severity, and we must follow them with our prayers but not with our censures. When the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity values them; shall we, who are less than nothing, dare to slight them and to cast a scornful eye upon them?

II. If God will strengthen the weakest grace, and not suffer it to fail, then this must increase our thankfulness to God, but it must not encourage our sloth, so as to make us contented with a little grace. When God is tender towards our weak grace, we must not lay aside our endeavours after more.

1. Grace is not grace, if it does not aspire after the increase of it self. That man was never yet made spiritually alive, who does not endeavour to be more lively : He that does not strive to go forwards, was never brought into the way of life : There is no grace, where there are no desires after a growth in it.

2. We must not contradict the design of God, but act in subserviency to it. The design of God is, to bring the weakest grace to its full growth, and when this is the design of God, we must concur with him in it : When God gives us a spiritual life, it is that we may not only live, but live to glorifie him by bringing forth much fruit. *Job. xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.*

III. If God will not despise the weakest grace, but will watch over it till it come to perfection, then the weakest grace is

of more worth than the whole world. It ought not to lessen our esteem of grace, because it has no universal testimony among men, and because all the individuals of mankind do not prize it as it deserves. In things which are within the sphere of reason, every rational creature either is, or ought to be both a witness and a judge, and the more the witnesses and judges are, the greater is the evidence and certainty; but in things which are above reason, as the mysteries of our salvation by Christ are, the suffrage of few is to be prefer'd to the vote of the ignorant and unbelieving multitude, because God opens the cabinet of his jewels, and reveals his secrets to his friends only, who are but a small number to his enemies. Grace is a great secret, and none are competent judges of its worth, but they who have it, and they who have grace are not many but very few if compared to them who have it not: The whole world is said to lie in wickedness, because it is but a very little part of the world that has escap'd the general deluge of impiety. 1 *Joh. v. 19. The whole world lieth in wickedness.* When the whole world is not only arraigned as wicked,

ed but said to lie in wickedness, can we suppose it to be less erroneous in judging, than profane in acting? When it stands universally attainted for immorality, can we acquit it from the charge of heresie? The worth of grace is not known by the men of the world; but the value of it is to be gathered from it's price, and from its efficient cause: Grace is purchased by no less price, than the blood of the only begotten Son of God, and it is wrought in us by no meaner agent, than the eternal spirit: When grace has the blood of Christ for its meriting price, the Spirit of God for its immediate efficient cause, and when it is in it self no less then the vernal bloom of eternal glory, shall it not be precious in our eyes, and shall we not engage ourselves in a most diligent search after it, as a pearl of the greatest price? Shall we not resolve rather to be found without all things in this world, than either to be found out of Christ's righteousness, which can only justify us before God, or to be found without the sanctifying work of Christ's spirit, which fits us for the enjoyment of heaven?

IV. If God will not suffer the weakest grace to be destroy'd but will preserve and strengthen it; then if we have grace, altho' it be weak, we ought to fall down and adore God for the grace which he has wrought in us, and for his wonderful condescension and infinite tenderness towards us, when our grace is weak. Forbearance towards us, when we are rebellious sinners, is undeserved mercy; pity towards us, when we are altogether weak and unworthy, is infinite compassion; and favour towards us, when we are most vile, is wonderful and amazing condescension. God spares us when we are stubborn sinners, he remembers us in mercy when we are fit to be trodden under foot, as loathsome dust, and he commiserates us when we are not only unprofitable, but give him the highest provocations to destroy us by our new backslidings. When we consider how God is infinitely good to us, not only in giving grace to us, but in preserving the grace which he has given; shall we not bless God for dealing with us not according to the greatness of our sins, but according to the riches of his mercy, and the faithfulness of his promises?

V. If God will not only preserve the weak grace of believers, but will bless them with the increase of grace, till he has brought them to heaven, then this may comfort us when our grace is weak, and when it is under decays which are usually accompanied with desertions. It is now winter with us, in respect of what it will be when we come to heaven: We are far from attaining to a perfection of grace, and yet we must not be discouraged because of our present imperfections. If we have grace in the lowest degree of it, we ought not to cast away our confidence: If the new creature be in us, altho' it be as a mere embrio, or *fætus formatus*, yet so long as it is alive, we may comfort our selves, because God will preserve it, and it is a seed that will spring up more and more till it rise as high as heaven. We have reason to mourn because our grace is not more strong, but we have ground to rejoice that we have any grace at all. As the least sin if it be loved and approved by us, and if we live in it when we should repent of it, brings us into a covenant with the devil; so the weakest grace proves us to be of God's family.

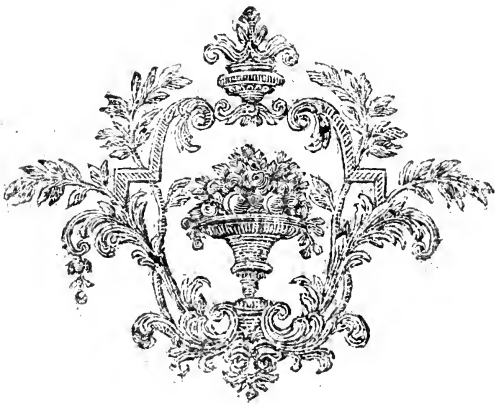
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The weakest grace is as really evidential in it self of our getting to heaven, as the strongest grace.

1. The smallest measure of special grace is a fruit of our union to Christ, which can never be dissolved. When we are united to Christ, we shall be kept from a total and final apostacy ; As Christ keeps a fast hold of us, so he strengthens us to renew our dependence on him : Common grace neither takes hold of the heart of a sinner, nor does it make him adhere to Christ : It is but like a drop of water, which hangs a while at the end of a man's finger, and then falls down again ; but special grace subdues every corruption in a believer, brings his heart into subjection to God, and puts him upon committing his soul to Christ, that he may be preserved from falling, when he can do nothing by his own strength to secure his standing.

2. The weakest grace is God's image, and has his royal stamp or mark on it. Weak grace is a little piece of coin, but it carries the superscription of the king of heaven, and it must pass for current, as well as that which is more valuable for quantity. When our grace is weak, we

may sow in tears, but we shall not reap with joy. *Psal. cxxvi. 6. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* He goes forth weeping, but he returns rejoicing. When he goes forth, it is seed that he carries with him, but when he returns, he brings his sheaves with him. We may go forth weeping, because our grace is weak, when we carry precious seed with us; but we shall doubtless return again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us, when we have reap'd the ripe fruits of a plentiful harvest.





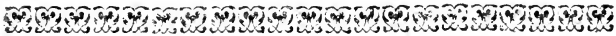
OF THE
E X C E L L E N C E
O F
Spiritual Pleasure.








OF THE
E X C E L L E N C E
O F
Spiritual Pleasure.



PROV. iii. 17.

*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and
all her paths are peace.*

Leasure has a most prevailing charm in it, and is that which all men desire and propound to themselves; but it is that of which few make a right choice, because they generally mistake about the very thing it self, and so count that their pleasure which is their present shame, and will be their

their future torment. Most men place all their pleasure in sin; it is their greatest pleasure either to bring misery on themselves, or to put others to pain. As all ungodly men seek pleasure in things where it never was, so they absolutely deny it to be in God's ways where it is only to be found: They think godliness confines the followers of it to perpetual melancholy, abridges them of every thing that is delightful, and keeps them continually under the rack and torture of craving unsatisfied desires. This is a most false charge, yet it is so universally believed in the world, that it raises a strong prejudice in all unregenerate men against true religion, whereby the door of their hearts is shut against it, and they are imboldened to justify their open hatred and contempt of it. It will be a proper work to remove this stumbling block, by shewing, that godliness is so far from interfering with any pleasure that is lawful, that we can never have any true pleasure till we be godly. If pleasure be unlawful, then it is our happiness and not our misery to be without it; but if it be lawful, then we may expect it in God's ways, and when he deprives us of any
lawful

of Spiritual Pleasure. 413

lawful pleasures, he will abundantly make up the loss of them to us, by giving us pleasures that are greater and better. Godliness retrenches us only of the pleasures that are unlawful, but it brings with it all the pleasures that are fit to be desired and chosen by us. The proof of this, is that which I shall attempt, that deluded sinners may either be left without excuse or induced to prize what now they hate, and that believers may rejoice in the blessed choice which they have made of the ways of wisdom.

In the words of the text, there is that said of wisdom which may be a special encouragement and a powerful motive, to persuade us to enquire and seek after it. *The ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* There is pleasure in her ways, and there is peace in all her paths. By wisdom is here meant, that wisdom which is the gift of special grace, and incircles in it all that which belongs to true Godliness. To believe in God, to serve him, and to provide for the eternal welfare of our souls, is the perfection of wisdom.

There are two things which may be noted in the words.

I. Wisdom

414 *Of the Excellence.*

I. Wisdom has her ways and paths. By the ways and paths of wisdom, we must understand the prescriptions of God's infinite wisdom concerning faith and obedience, or all that which God has commanded us to believe, and required us to do. To walk in the ways of wisdom, is to live with God and it is to live to him; it is to live with God, in receiving the good which he has promised; it is to live to God, in doing that which he has commanded.

II. The ways and paths of wisdom, are pleasant and full of peace. The ways of wisdom are both safe and pleasant: They are safe, and so safe, that there is no safety out of them; there is nothing but danger in our own wandrings; but there is safety in all God's ways: They are pleasant and full of peace; they yield pleasure to a believer when he walks in them, and he will find much more pleasure in the end of them: The ways of God are good, but the end of them will be better.

The doctrine which I shall raise from the words is this.

The ways of God are full of pleasure.

In prosecuting the doctrinal Truth, I shall do four things.

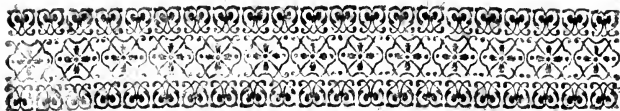
I. I shall shew, what that pleasure is; whereof the ways of God are full.

II. I shall shew, to whom the ways of God are pleasant.

III. I shall prove, that the most desirable pleasures are to be found in the ways of God.

IV. I shall improve the doctrinal Truth by way of application.





C H A P. I.

*A Description of true
pleasure.*

I Shall shew, what that pleasure is, where-
of the ways of God are full. Pleasure
is the rest and delight, which the soul of
a man finds in its desired object. We must
distinguish concerning pleasure, which is
various. There is the pleasure of sense:
This is that which is grateful to the sensi-
tive part of a man; this pleasure belongs
to the life of sense. There is a pleasure
which is intellectual: This is a pleasure
that results from the enjoyment of things
which are congruous to the nature of our
souls, as they are rational and intelligent
Spirits: This pleasure belongs to the life of
reason. There is besides a pleasure which
is divine and spiritual: This is that which
belongs to the life of grace, and it is the
plea-

pleasure whereof the ways of God are full. The perfection of divine and spiritual pleasure is in heaven; but there is not only a beginning, but a gradual increase of it in this life to them that walk in the ways of God.

Divine and spiritual pleasure is the perception which we have of a supreme good, or the fruition which we have of a suitable and satisfying object. The only object which is both suitable, and every way satisfying to our immortal souls, is God, as he gives himself to us in Christ, to be enjoy'd as our portion. Spiritual pleasure cannot arise from any thing short of God, as he is a God at peace with us in Christ. As the pleasure of sense is from the acting of the sensitive faculty about the objects of sense, and as intellectual pleasure is from the the acting of the intellectual faculty about things that are agreeable to reason; so spiritual pleasure is from the acting of the understanding, as it is spiritually enlightened, and of the will as it is spiritually renew'd, about God in Christ, who is the highest, the most perfect, and the most glorious object. The platonists who had better apprehensions of the pleasure of the

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soul,

soul, than many pretended Christians, say, it is a pleasure arising from the union of that which is infinite with that which is finite. *

The soul has its original immediately from God, and it cannot be satisfied with any thing inferior to him: Every one that is in a state of regeneration, speaks to himself in the words of the royal psalmist and says, *Return unto thy rest O! my Soul. Psal. cxvi. 7.* A believer is returned to God in respect of union, but while he is out of heaven he is returning to him in regard of fruition: Altho' he has a real enjoyment of God, yet his soul is in motion after a fuller fruition of him. As a heavy body can neither rest in the air, altho' it be wide, nor in the water altho' it be deep, but still sinks down lower till it comes to its center; so the soul of a man when it is new form'd by regenerating grace, can find no pleasure either in airy honours, or in earthly riches, or in the watery pleasures of this world, but is restless in its motion

* *Voluptatis generatio fit ex infiniti & finiti copulatione.*

till it come to God. It is in the contemplation of God, as he is a God forgiving every iniquity and sin, redeeming from a weight of eternal misery, and freely bestowing the riches of glory, that a believer has more joy in one hour, than wicked men have all their days, in running up and down after the pleasures of this life: It is in God that a believer rejoices. *Psal.* ix. 2. *I will be glad and rejoice in thee.* I will rejoice, not in raking wealth together, not in the applause of men, not in a curious taste, not in costly perfumes, not in the proportion of a comely body, and not in the melody of well contrived songs; but I will rejoice in thee. As there is a beauty in God, to which all other excellence is but deformity, and as there is a glory in him, to which all other lustre is but a stain and blemish; so there is a pleasure to be enjoy'd in God, to which all other pleasure is but anguish and bitterness.





C H A P. II.

Believers proved to be the only persons, to whom the ways of God are pleasant.

I Shall shew who they are, to whom the ways of God are pleasant. The ways of God are only pleasant to believers: Where there is spiritual pleasure, there must be three things which are in none but believers, *viz.* A new or spiritual nature; a spiritual palate or taste; and the exercise of a spiritual taste or sense.

I. there must be a new or a spiritual nature, in them to whom the ways of God are pleasant. A new nature must be given to a fallen sinner, before he has a capacity to receive or enjoy spiritual pleasures: The old nature of a sinner which is full of enmity and aversion to God as he is the chiefest

chiefest good, must be taken away before he can love God or delight in his ways. All sinners as they are in their natural state are haters of God. *Rom. i. 30.* There is not only no agreement, but a direct contrariety between God and sinners, and therefore enmity against God is radicated in their nature. There must be a change of a man's very nature, before there can be a change of his pleasures from carnal, to spiritual.

II. There must be a spiritual palate or taste in them, to whom the ways of God are pleasant. Where there is spiritual pleasure, there must not only be a suitable object sufficient to afford a supreme satisfaction; but this object must be fitly apply'd to a faculty prepar'd and disposed to receive and enjoy it: When there is no preparation or disposition of the faculties of our souls for spiritual things, we can have no fruition of God as he is the most desirable and amiable object. When men are in a state of ignorance, and are alienated from the life of God, they satisfy themselves with sinful pleasures, and desire no greater happiness, than to be left without restraint, to fulfill the will of the flesh: As long as they are under the governing

verning influence of corrupt sense, they have no more a relish of spiritual things, than a beast has of the pleasures of angels. Carnal men cannot be brought to think, that there is more worth in grace than in gold, or that there is more pleasure in communion with Christ, than there is in good fellowship (as they call it) with their lewd and drunken companions.

The frame of impure sinners is not in the least suited to spiritual things, but is contrary to them, and because their frame is contrary to spiritual things, they are no more pleasant to them than the sound of a musical consort is to a deaf man, or the resolution of a curious problem in geometry or astronomy is to a natural idiot. When men are guided by a fleshly principle, they are then only pleased and refreshed with things that are agreeable to the flesh. *Rom. viii. 5. They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh.* They that are led and govern'd by fleshly appetites, are not affected with spiritual things, because they have no light in their minds to know their worth, and no relish or favour in their affections to taste their sweetness. There must be a spiritual taste antecedent

tecedent to spiritual pleasure: This spiritual taste is consequent to the renovation of our depraved nature, which is the work of God's spirit. It is God by his spirit, that must form in our minds right conceptions of spiritual things, and create in our wills and affections a spiritual relish and taste of them, before we can have pleasure in the ways of godliness. It is God that makes us to drink of the river of his pleasures. *Psal. xxxvi 8. Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* There must be a thirst previous to our drinking of the river of God's pleasures: God first makes us thirsty, and when he has made us thirsty, he then makes us to drink of the river of his pleasures.

III. There must not only be a spiritual palate or taste in them to whom the ways of God are pleasant, but they must have their spiritual taste or sense exercised. All believers have a spiritual taste; but all believers have it not exercised, and therefore all believers have not pleasure in the ways of God. When sinners rejoice, as if there were no hell, it is because they presume; and when believers are cast down, as if there were no heaven, it is because

they have not their spiritual taste or sense exercised. When a believer has not only peace with God, but conscience to witness to it, he has then joy within himself, and he sucks the promises as they are the breasts of consolation. *Isa. lxvi. 11. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation.* The promises of God are breasts of consolation to the church, because it is by the promises that the infinite, immutable and eternal love of God is declared to sinners in Christ: When believers can apply the promises to themselves by faith, the promises then prove breasts of consolation, and by sucking the promises, as they are breasts of consolation, believers are satisfied. When believers have their spiritual taste exercised about spiritual things, they then find a pleasure in God's ways, which is infinitely more substantial and sublime, than all the pleasure which is convey'd to them by their outward senses.





C H A P. III.

*The pleasures which are found
in the ways of God, proved
to be most desirable.*

I Shall prove that the most desirable pleasures, and the only pleasures which ought to be desired by us, are to be found in the ways of God. There are four things which may be predicated of the pleasure that is in God's ways, and prove it to be the most desirable pleasure, and the only pleasure, that ought to be desired by us. It is not lost in the midst of troubles and afflictions; it sweetens all afflictions, and renders the most difficult duties in religion easy; it brings contentment and satisfaction; and it is eternal.

I. The pleasure which is in God's ways is not lost in the midst of troubles and afflictions: It is not destroy'd when believers
are

are furrounded with worldly sorrows. 2 Cor. vi. 10. *As sorrowful yet always rejoicing.* God can give inward joy to believers, in the midst of their outward sorrows: When their sorrows abound, he can make their consolations much more to abound. *The hearts of them shall live that seek God. Psal. lxxix, 32.* Their hearts shall not only live, but *live for ever. Psal. xxii. 26.* Believers are like trees planted by the rivers of water. *Jer. xvii. 7, 8. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* A tree that shoots its roots into dry earth, withers and dies in a year of drought, if it have no rain to keep it green; but a tree that stands by a running river, from whence the roots of it draw sap and juice, is not hurt in the year of drought. As it is with a tree planted by a river, so it is with a believer: When he loses all his outward comforts, Christ is as a secret river that continually runs by his roots to refresh them.

them. When all the affections of a man are shot into the profits and pleasures of this life, when he comes to be deprived of them, he is then like the heath in the desert which withers and dies for want of moisture; but a believer whose affections are linked to Christ, as the spring of his consolation, is like a tree by a river side, that feels not the scorching heat in the year of drought.

II. The pleasure which is in God's ways, sweetens all afflictions, and renders the most difficult duties in religion easy. When Christ was at the marriage in *Cana of Gallilee*, he turned the water into wine. *Joh. ii. 7, 8, 9. 10.* All the wine of a carnal man's comforts is turned into water, because of Christ's absence; but the presence of Christ with a believer, turns the bitter water of adversity into wine: The presence of Christ with a believer sweetens all his afflictions, and renders the hardest duties pleasant to him. *Psal. lxxxiv. 6, 7.* *Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: The rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God.* This was spoken of them who went up to *Jerusalem*, from the
remote

remote parts of the land of *Canaan* to worship before the Lord. The vally of *Bacha* through which they passed, was a sandy dry place full of mulberry-trees, (which the word בְּרִי signifies) without water and other things for refreshment. It may be asked, how they who had a transcript of the law of God in their hearts, could make this dry valley to be as a well, and as pools of water. I answer: When they were not only weary but thirsty, they did then meditate on that great and everlasting God, whom they were going to meet in his ordinances, and he both comforted their souls, and renewed their bodily strength: The gracious presence of God with them, was better than springs of water for them to drink of, or showers of rain to cool the air; it was because of the presence of God with them, that they did in the midst of difficulties go from strength to strength, and every one of them in *Zion* appeared before God: Not one of them died by the way, but they were all preserved: The farther they went the stronger they were, they were reviv'd by every step they took, and the nearer they came to the end of their journey the more lively they grew: Their
strength

strength was not impair'd, but increased by their travel and labour.

III. The pleasure which is in God's ways, brings contentment and satisfaction.

1. There is a fulness in it which refreshes and satisfies. When a believer has most of spiritual pleasure he longs for more of it, but the present enjoyment which he has of it contents and satisfies him : It is a river that makes glad the city of God. *Psal.* xlvi. 4. Christ in his ordinances is like a river divided into several streams, to refresh the city of God. Christ is a river of pleasure that is ever fresh, never empty'd, and never ebbing but always full and running with reviving streams : There is no danger of taking too much of this river of spiritual pleasures, because the ocean which feeds this river is infinite : There is in Christ not only a running river, but a bottomless sea of pleasure, that can never be drunk up.

2. There is not only a fulness of plenty but a fulness of variety in the spiritual pleasures, and therefore they are represented to us as a feast which is not common but extraordinary.

(1.) They

430 *Of the Excellence*

(1.) They are as a feast of fat things, *Isa. xxv. 6. In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.* Spiritual pleasures are a feast of fat things, where there is not only wine but wine which is on the lees, and well refined: Wine on the lees, that is well refined, is wine that is both pure and in its full strength. A man should come hungry to a feast: but he goes from it not empty but satisfied, because there is both fulness and variety at a feast.

(2.) They are as the feast of a king, which must have something magnificent in it, and they are as the feast not only of a king, but of a king for the marriage solemnity of his son. *Matth. xxii. 2, 3, 4.* The feast of a king is above the standard of ordinary feasts; but the feast which he makes for the marriage of his son, is above all the feasts which he makes at other times: God who is the king of kings and has all things at his disposal, makes a feast for believers, who are married to his only begotten Son when he is present with them in his ordinances, and at this feast he shews
his

his unparallel'd bounty. When the guests at this feast have their spiritual appetites quickned and raised to receive what God gives, they then enjoy more pleasure in their pilgrimage state than they can declare to others. 1 *Pet.* i. 8. *In whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* That which is intended in the words is this; Believers in this life may have as clear a manifestation of the glory, and as full a taste of the joys of heaven, as they are capable of receiving, and much more than they are able to express in words: When they have heaven opened to them, and when the divine person of Christ, which is now invisible to the eye of sense, is made visible to their faith with great clearness, they then rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

3. There is not only a fulness of variety, but there is also a transcendent and superlative sweetness in spiritual pleasures. This made the royal psalmist say. *Psal.* xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*

ple. The tabernacle had the figure of heavenly things in Christ. *Heb.* viii. 5. This was the one thing which *David* desired to behold in the light of faith, and he earnestly pursued and prosecuted the grant of his desire. Every believer has many things to desire and ask of God, and yet there is one thing that he desires with a supremacy of affection, and wherein all his desires are summ'd up. What is this one thing? I answer; It is the enjoyment of God in ordinances as his God and Father in Christ: This is the one thing that he desires before all things, and above all things.

(1.) Because this one thing which he desires, has all things in it. A sinner has emptiness and dissatisfaction in the many things which he desires; but a believer has fulness and satisfaction in the one thing which he enjoys: Without this one thing all things are nothing to him; but in this one thing he has all things. The creatures are finite, and because they are finite, they have only a limited use, and cannot possibly satisfy the boundless desires of our souls: The light which enlightens us cannot nourish us, the meat which feeds us cannot cloath us, the garments that cover
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our nakedness cannot heal our diseases, and the medicines that cure our diseases cannot protect or defend our persons; but the same God that enlightens a believer, can feed, cloath, heal, protect, comfort, and enrich him, beyond his desires and expectations.

(2.) Because this one thing has not only all things in it, but it is infinitely better than all things. God to a believer is not only all in every enjoyment, and all enjoyments in one, but he is infinitely better than all other things that can be enjoy'd. God in Christ is the perfection of all holy delights, and the enjoyment of him, is the center of all a believer's fervent and hearty desires.

IV. The pleasure which is in God's ways, is eternal: It has a beginning, but no end. When all things leave us, the spiritual pleasure which is in God's ways will stay by us. In the garden of God, there are plants that feed and nourish, but do not poison, like the airy satisfaction which flows from the wearisom work of making provision for the flesh, there are roses which have no prickles underneath their leaves, as all carnal delight have; and there are flowers that never fade or wither, and the

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fragrance which arises from them is not like the sensual joy which the mirth of frothy sinners affords. The pleasure which is in God's ways, not only continues in all the changes of time, but is eternal in its duration.

1. It is a pleasure that continues in all the changes of time: It is not only a river, because of its fulness, but as a living spring, because of its durability: It is as a spring of water whose waters fail not. *Isa. lviii. 11. The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.* There are many things here promised: As direction as well as protection, *he shall guide thee continually*, he shall lead thee as he did *Israel* in the wilderness; relief in the greatest distress, *he shall satisfy thy soul in drought, or in droughts* (the plural signifies extremity of drought) He will fill the longings of thy needy soul, according to thy largest desires; strength and liveliness, *he will make fat thy bones*, he will make thee strong and vigorous; a flourishing prosperous condition, *thou shalt be like a watered garden*, thou shalt flourish and prosper,

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prosper, and have spiritual blessings in abundance; and a continuance of divine pleasures, *Thou shalt be like a spring of water whose waters fail not, or do not deceive*, thou shalt have streams to refresh thee, and a spring to satisfy thee.

2. The pleasure which is in God's ways, is eternal in its duration. Man has a two-fold desire which must be satisfied, before he can have any tranquility in his soul; *viz.* A desire of perfection, and a desire of perpetuity; it is only in Christ that he can have his desire of perfection, and his desire of perpetuity answered: It is in Christ that his desire of perfection is answered; it is in Christ, that a sinner is not only delivered from the greatest misery, but is raised to the highest degree of happiness whereof he is capable: It is in Christ that his desire of perpetuity is answered; it is in Christ that he has his happiness perpetuated, in the enjoyment of pleasures that will be eternally durable in their full perfection: Christ conveys pleasures to believers, till they come to the feast of heaven, where there will be pleasure without mixture, and a fulness of pleasure for e-

vermore. *Pfal. xvi. 11. At thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more.* In the next life they who are miserable shall know nothing but sorrow, but they who are happy shall know nothing but pleasure.



C H A P. I.

The Application of the doctrinal Truth.

I Shall improve the doctrinal Truth by way of Application.

I. If the ways of God be full of pleasure, then this may comfort believers who walk in them, and yet have no present sense of the pleasure which is in them. There is pleasure in the ways wherein they walk, and altho' they have it not now, they shall have it hereafter. *Pfal. xcvi. 11. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* God is the husband
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bandman that sows the light of comfort as good seed, and he both can and will preserve it, and cause it to grow : The light of comfort is sown by God for the righteous, and altho' it may for a time lie hid, and be as if it were dead under the furrows of affliction, yet it will spring up and will afford the righteous a good crop. The righteous must not despond when they have not the light of comfort, but must remember that it is sown for them : They must believe God's promise, when they do not see the accomplishment of it : When they have a night of darkness, they must not lose their hope, but wait for the morning light : The expected approach of the light of joy, must comfort them in the midst of their present sorrows. *Psal. xxx. 5. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

II. If the ways of God be full of pleasure, then we ought to try, whether ever we experienced any thing of the pleasure which is in God's ways. We may know whether we have had the experience of that spiritual pleasure wherewith the ways of God are fill'd, by six things.

1. Spiritual

1. Spiritual pleasure will make us more holy. That rejoicing which either abates a man's care to avoid all sin, or leaves him unguarded, with respect to Satan's temptations, or permits him to speak or act unwarily, or leads him rather to the tavern than to his closet, is contrary to the holy spirit of promise, and is only from a spirit of licentiousness. All rejoicing that does not tend in it self to make us more holy, is from a dark spring, and comes under a curse: The pleasure of the world leaves a defiling spot on the soul, which no elementary water can wash out; but spiritual pleasure is pure, and will imprint on us more of the image of God's holiness.

2. Spiritual pleasure is consistent with a filial fear of God, and with the highest degree of humility. *Psal. ii. 11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* The adopted children of God mix their rejoicing with trembling, and when they are above the fear which belongs to slaves, they have then most of that fear of God, as a Father, which is proper to Sons: A filial fear does not contradict a strong faith, but is twined with it, and a deep humili-
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ty is the disposition of them who find pleasure in God's ways, altho' it be no cause or condition why they are richly entertain'd. When we come before God without awful and reverential thoughts of him, he then uncloaths his ordinances of their quickening power, and of their refreshing vigour; but when he makes his ordinances to be as wells full of water to us, he first fills us with fear, and with self abhorring thoughts. Streams of spiritual pleasures water the low valleys of humble souls, when the lofty mountains of pride are scorch'd and parch'd with heat.

3. Spiritual pleasure strengthens us to walk in all the ways of God: It does not enfeeble or dispirit us, but it is both a proof of our strength, and a *medium* to make us strong. *Neh. viii. 10. The joy of the Lord is your strength.* It is Christ received and fed on by faith, that is the sole cause of our spiritual pleasure, and as he is the most excellent food, so he is the most strengthening nourishment for our souls. *Joh. vi. 55. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* When we believe in Christ and so feed upon him spiritually, then his flesh that was crucified for us, to satisfie

the justice of God, is meat indeed, and his blood which was shed to wash us from our sins is drink indeed. Christ is the best meat and drink, because he is the only meat and drink that can feed and nourish our souls to eternal life, and that has a divine energy in it, to strengthen us for all acts of obedience to God.

4. Spiritual pleasure has for its concomitant or consequent, if not for its antecedent, a true sorrow for sin. The angel first troubled the waters of the pool of *Bethesda*, before he gave them a medicinal power and virtue. *Job. v. 4. An Angel went down, at a certain season, into the pool, and troubled the waters: Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepp'd in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.* It is our duty to lie at the pool side of ordinances, waiting for the descent of the angel of the covenant, but it is his work to make the waters of his ordinances healing and comforting: What way does he ordinarily take to do this? I answer; He first troubles, and then he cures and comforts: He does this that he may make us prize the rich grace whereby we are cured and comforted, and hate the sin whereby

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we have been troubled. We may suspect that pleasure or joy which is got without all pain, to be no other than the joy of the hypocrite which is but for a moment.

5. Spiritual pleasure destroys not our enjoyment of lawful earthly comforts, but it regulates our enjoyment of them, and confines us not only to use them moderately, but also in a way of subservience to the enjoyment of God. A believer may desire the lawful and innocent comforts of this world, but it is God only that he desires with a predominant affection. *Psal.* lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* There are several things on earth, that a believer desires in subordination to God, but there is not one thing that he desires in competition with him.

6. Spiritual pleasure raises in us a thirst after a fuller enjoyment of God. Every drop of spiritual pleasure enflames our thirst after more. The Church in some of her first requests, desired only communion with Christ on the mountains of *Bether.* *Sol. Song.* ii. 17. *Untill the day break, and the shadows fly away: Turn my beloved, and*
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be thou like a roe, or young hart upon the mountains of Bether, or the mountains of distance and division. The presence of Christ with her, as a roe or young hart on the mountains of distance or division, which she now pray'd for, was communion with him in his ordinances: This was that which she here desired, and she had her desire: When she had communion with Christ in his ordinances, which was that which she ask'd, did it put a final stop to all further desires? I answer; no, it raised in her vehement desires after the nearest embraces of Christ in a state of glory: She mounted up as high as heaven in her desires, and so concludes the marriage song between Christ and her, with a fervent prayer for the immediate fruition of him in a perfect state. *Sol. Song. viii. 14. Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.* Communion with Christ on the mountains of distance was that which she at first desired, but now she must have Christ on the mountains of spices, or in heaven it self, where there is communion between Christ and glorified spirits without any distance. If ever we have communion with Christ in
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his ordinances, then nothing lower than communion with him in heaven, will terminate the motion of our ascending desires.

If our pleasure make us more holy, if it be consistent with a filial fear of God and a deep humility, if it strengthen us to walk in the ways of God, if a true sorrow for sin either go before, or accompany or follow it, if it confines us to use all our lawful earthly comforts in a way of subservience to the enjoyment of God, and if it raises in us desires after more communion with Christ, it is then that pleasure whereof the ways of God are full, and which is a foretaste of the eternal pleasures of heaven.

III. If the ways of God be full of pleasure, then we must seek pleasure only in God's ways which are his ordinances. Christ has a bed for the repose of his people, and a chariot to bring them to the bed of their rest: He has a bed for their repose. *Sol. Song.* iii. 7. Christ's bed is the rest which the soul of a believer finds in God: This rest is not only initial here on earth, but there is a gradation from lower to higher degrees of it: It is perfect and eternal, in heaven; there will

will be a rest in heaven without all weariness: How must we come to this bed of spiritual rest? I answer; by riding in Christ's chariot. Verse 9, 10. *King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being pav'd with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.* The ordinances of God which are prayer, meditation, the reading and hearing of the word, and the administration of the seals of the covenant of grace, are the chariot in which Christ carries his people up and down in this world, and brings them to a more intimate communion with himself: The midst of this chariot is paved with love. When the love of Christ is experienced by believers in ordinances, then one day to them is better than a thousand. *Psal. lxxxiv. 10. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.* Every day that a believer lives with God in his courts, is better than a thousand days: it is for this reason that the life of a lively contemplative believer may be said to be long, when yet it consists not of many years: He may (according to the arithmetick of heaven

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which is the surest way of reckoning) be a very old man when he dies, and yet die young: If one day with God be better than a thousand days without him, then a believer that lives one year with God in his courts, lives a longer and better life, than if he lived a thousand years without any enjoyment of God in his ordinances.

IV. If the ways of God be full of the most desirable pleasures, and of the only pleasure, which ought to be desired by us, then all sinners who are strangers to the ways of God are most miserable. If the ways of God be full of pleasure, then the ways of sin, which are contrary to God's ways, can have no true pleasure in them, but must be full of trouble. When men walk in the ways of sin, they are rack'd with pride, gnawn with envy, and torn in pieces by their unreasonable cares and fears. The further they go in the ways of sin, the more trouble they bring to themselves because they must come back every step which they take in the ways of sin by faith and repentance, before they can go right to have comfort. The ways of sin may please for a while, but at present they are troublesome, and in the end they will be more troublesome. It is by a de-
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fire of pleasure that men are drawn to all sin, and yet the pleasures which sinners desire and seek after are to be rejected, because they are either sinful in themselves, or they become sinful, because they are desired and sought after without a reference to God. Most miserable are they, who only desire and seek after the pleasures of this world without God. Their misery may be proved to be great by six things.

I. All the pleasures of this world abstracted from God, are no ways suited to reason, as it is enlightened and sanctified, but they defile our souls, and as they pollute our souls, they rob us of God's favour, and deprive us of his image. The pleasures of this world without God, are the infection of youth, the reproach of life, and the madness of old age, because they feed all our spiritual maladies, but they cannot give us any relief in the midst of our sorrows: They corrupt our judgments, enslave our wills, betray our reason, enfeeble our courage, flatter us up in our sins, and steal away our hearts and affections from God. When our hearts and affections are set on the pleasures of this world, we then bring much sin upon ourselves

selves, because we break our matrimonial contract with God. *James iv. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* The same sinners that maintain such a friendship with the world, as is enmity with God, are both adulterers and adulteresses. They are adulterers, because they are bewitch'd with a gilded image or appearance of earthly things, to which they give their whole hearts that should be offered up to God alone. They are adulteresses because by the image or appearance of earthly things wherewith they are enticed and enchanted, the devil by their own consent, acts upon them, deflowers their souls, and infuses the rankest poison and venom of hell into them: It is for this reason that when they are adulterers they are also adulteresses, and therefore their sin is double in the same individual act. The pleasures of this world without God are to be rejected, but not to be desired and chosen, because by the pollution and defilement which they bring upon our souls, they both rob us of God's favour, which is our happiness, and they deprive us of God's image, which is our only beauty.

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2. Sinful pleasures are so short that they are rather imaginary than real : they are but the laughter of the fool, who laughs when he should weep. *Eccl. vii 6. As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.* The fool is either the profane man in the world, or the hypocritical professor in the Church. As thorns under a pot crackle much, burn suddenly, and heat for the present, but the blaze which they make is soon extinguish'd ; so the pleasures of sin are but for a season. *Heb. xi. 25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* The pleasures of sin are only for a season, and for a shorter season than a sinner thinks : They are only for life, and they often do not last out this life : The voluptuous sinner eats and drinks to day, and dies before the morrow ; his pleasure becomes his bane ; like as a drunken *Anacreon*, the jovial merry Greek, was choak'd with the husk or kernel of a grape.

3. Sinful pleasures can bring no satisfaction. They only increase a man's desires : When he goes about to fulfill his lusts he creates himself more trouble, by laying out for himself more work ; his going one er-
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rand, is the occasion of his being sent upon another. He cannot satisfy one lust but he disgusts another; he cannot gratify the lust of prodigality, without crossing the lust of covetousness. Sinful pleasures sometimes are no longer valued than there is difficulty to obtain them: Sinners have no estimate for that which is got with ease: It is difficulty that sets a price on sinful pleasures. *Prov. ix. 7. Stolen waters are sweet.* If they were not stolen, they would not be sweet to them that steal them: That which is lawful and allow'd is not acceptable to impure spirits, but that which is sinful and forbidden violently enflames their lusts. A sinner not only follows the sway of the desires which he has already form'd, but he frames new desires without number or end: He desires thousands of things which cannot be obtain'd; and of all the things which he obtains, the pleasure of them either vanishes or grows burdensome. The lusts of the heart are like the flowing of a river whose channel becomes wider, and whose stream grows fiercer, the further it runs. A sinner in the pursuit of his lust, is often more violent in his after desires than in his first motions: His desires which came from the

troubled sea of concupiscence and are driven with the stormy wind of Satan's temptations, are insatiable. The covetous man loads himself with thick clay, but is never satisfied. He has wo, but no satisfaction. *Hab. ii. 6. Wo to him that loads himself with thick clay.* The covetous man may lay up enough to break his back, but not to satisfy the desires of his heart: He may fill his house, but not his lust. The desires of a covetous man are a restless torture till they be answered, and when they are answered they leave his soul empty and sick. When he receives that which he desires, his lust is enlarg'd but not satisfied. The pleasures of sin cloy, but never satisfy; they delude the sense, but do not delight the soul; they bring no satisfaction, but end in loathing: Old age or affliction renders them not only insipid but distastful.

4. There is a close connexion between sinful pleasure and trouble. Sinners are disturb'd with their lusts, and they weary themselves to do wickedly. *Isa. lvii. 10. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way.* The covetous man does so weary himself that he cannot sleep: The adulterer wears himself to watch for the twilight. *Job.*

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xxiv. 15. *The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight.* Ignorant, foolish, childish sinners will sit up late, to play at cards and dice. Sinners weary themselves in their ways and they will be weary of their ways, when they see what they are, and whither they have led them. Sinful pleasure has trouble for its continual companion: It is introduced with wantonness, it is accompanied with filthiness, and it is followed with anguish and sorrow: It is a great trouble for a man to get sinful pleasures, when he has got them he is then afraid lest he should lose them; and when he has lost them he has then sorrow: God casts riches out of a wicked man's belly. *Job. xx. 15.* This cannot be done without great pain. When the sensualist crowns his head with roses, he then prepares for himself a crown of thorns. The union between sin and mirth is forc'd: Sin has a canker in it, that soon frets out all the varnish that is upon the rejoicing of carnal men: When they will not put away sin from their mirth, God will then take away all mirth from their sin: When God begins to trouble them, then all their sinful pleasure cannot secure them against the terrors of conscience. When God speaks

terror to the guilty consciences of sinners, their torment is then that which they can no more avoid, than they can put from them their very thoughts: They may as well run from themselves, as from a tormenting conscience; it will follow and persecute them to hell it self. When God rebukes sinners in his displeasure, they are then troubled out of measure, because they have a pursuing vengeance behind them, shame and fear on every side, and inevitable danger before them.

5. All the pleasures which are the present delight of sinners will end in their eternal destruction. The pleasure which they have in their burning lusts, will end in everlasting burnings: The pleasures of sin are accompany'd with a sharp sting, and they will be followed with endless remorse: They may be as honey in the mouth of a sinner, but they will be as the gall of asps in his bowels: At present they may seem sweet, but in the end they will be bitter. The short time of sinful pleasures is the seed time of everlasting sorrows: Sinners know not their own misery, but in prison lead a merry life and gild over their fetters of iron with Gold: They may now out-brave the authority

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rity of God in his word, and despise his angry face in his judgments; but when he lays his hand upon them, they shall then have trouble and anguish which will be greater than words can now utter: When all will be dark without, they shall have nothing within but the bitings and gnawings of a conscience oppress'd with guilt: They do not live so full of carnal joy, as they shall die full of sorrow. The false light of sinners, like the light of the evening shines less and less, till it be wrapt up in a black night of eternal darkness; and when the false light of sinners ends in eternal darkness, they must then lie down in sorrow, and their life shall be more bitter than death: They may for a season walk in the light of their own fire, and in the sparks which they have kindled, but when they come to receive the reward of their sins from the hand of God, they shall lie down in sorrow, and rise no more. *Isa. l. 11.* To pursue sinful pleasures is to gather scorpions for a future wound, it is to look for honey in a nest of hornets, and to seek ease in the midst of hell.

6. The pleasure which men find in fulfilling their lusts in this life, will prove
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their torment in the other world: That which is their pleasure here, will be their pain hereafter. When all the objects of a sinner's inordinate desires are snatch'd away from him, then his own lusts will be his tormentors. *Rev. xviii. 14. The fruits that thy soul lusted after, are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.* In hell all the goodly things of sinners shall depart from them, and when it is impossible for sinners to regain the things which they have lost, they will then be tormented with desires after them: When they must for ever despair of finding them, yet they will be fill'd with violent desires and longings after them. When they have no possible hope to obtain them, yet they will desire them with great vehemence: Absolute despair about the things which they will eagerly desire, will be a rack upon which they will be stretch'd and broken without any intermission. The lusts of sinners in the other world will be like a multitude of vipers in their breasts, thrusting all their stings into them. The very sin in which men now live with pleasure will be their torment in hell, because in hell the
wrath

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wrath of God will join with their sin to make it a fire to burn their souls: This truth may be illustrated by the following similitude: A fish lives naturally in the water, but if the water be made boiling and scalding hot if the fish be put into it, the fish will then die in the same water wherein it lived with pleasure before: In hell God will make the self same sins wherein men live with pleasure in this world, to be for their torment, because when he enflames their sins by his infinite wrath, then their sins will scald and burn their souls. When the wrath of God, in the infinite fulness and sharpness of it, comes once to meet with their sins, it will make their sins to be as rosin or pitch in a barrel, to burn and devour their souls for ever.

If the pleasures of this world without God defile and pollute our souls, if the pleasures of sin be short and vanishing, if they bring much trouble but no satisfaction, if they will end in eternal destruction, and if they will be inconceivably more painful and tormenting to sinners in the other world, than they have been desirable and grateful in this life, then I must entreat you that are lovers of the pleasures of this world more
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than lovers of God, to be sensible of your phrensy, to retract your destructive folly, and to make a new choice which will prevent your misery, and will secure your eternal happiness. I must exhort you to abhor the ways of sin, in which the youngest of you have too long walk'd, and to pray to God to bring you to Christ who is the only way to all pleasure in the highest perfection. If you choose the ways of God, you may lose the pleasures that are carnal, empty, unsatisfying and transient; but you shall have pleasures that are pure, spiritual, full, satisfying and permanent: You shall have a double heaven; the one in your passage, the other at your journeys end; the one in the way, the other in the country; the one in labour, the other in rest; the one in time, the other in eternity.

F I N I S.





